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Swimming Upstream:

A Documentation of Process

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Swimming Upstream:

A Documentation of Process

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Thesis

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Abstract

Swimming Upstream:

A Documentation of Process

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Swimming Upstream is an original work written, directed, and designed by Ilana Marks. The script tells the story of a gay sperm on a journey through the female body. A fully produced workshop performance occurred in the Oscar Brockett Theatre as part of The University Co-op Presents the Cohen New Works Festival. The performance of an excerpt from the script incorporated live actors, puppetry, multimedia, and music, and transformed the audience members into sperm involved in the ultimate game of chance. The purpose of this work was to explore and develop a personal creative process of storytelling.

This thesis documents the process that Ilana employed to create Swimming Upstream. She focuses on the incorporation of audience interaction into performance, looking to the work of performance artists, such as Julian Beck and Richard Schechner.

In addition, she addresses the variation between the process and the final product, and the factors of the process that cultivated the disparity between the two.

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Introduction

In conjunction with the opening of the movie Juno, Netflix released a competition asking young filmmakers to create short films addressing “a situation beyond [their] maturity.” This prompt compelled me to create the story of Harold, the gay sperm.

When I began writing about this character, I was working in multimedia, and textiles and fiber art. Audiences continuously asked why I was working in these two seemingly opposite areas. I saw these two mediums as natural means to my end interests in writing, directing, and designing for attractions and film. Nevertheless, I spent a lot of time trying to find that missing piece, the element that would combine all of the tools in my repertoire into something that epitomized my artistic sensibilities. I saw how the materials informed storytelling, and vice versa, but had trouble articulating that relationship in my visual work. As I continued to develop Harold’s journey, I found myself carving a niche that fit my experience.

Swimming Upstream is important because this project allows me to establish a personal creative process that incorporates my diverse skill sets. In addition this work challenges me to investigate the criticality of each element employed to animate and produce the narrative. I hope to discover a method that links the digital, to the live, to the interactive in a way that supports the central themes of the text. Swimming Upstream naturally merges my skills and interests to tell Harold’s story in a multifaceted way.

Chapter 1: Fertilization: The Beginning of the Idea

Studying attraction design has instilled in me a love for interactivity. In museums and other attractions, interactive devices engage users in a way that appeals to multiple learning styles, and that provides a customizable and versatile experience. However, according to research by Dirk vom Lehn, Christian Heath, and Jon Hindmarsh of the Work, Interaction, and Technology Research Group at King's College, London, interactive kiosks and exhibits in museums and galleries “[prioritize] the individual user and largely [neglect] collaboration and simultaneous co-participation” (2.). When I began developing Swimming Upstream as a live theatrical experience, I knew that I wanted to engage the audience beyond the established passive role. Including audience interaction in a live theatrical event would engage the audience, and succeed in introducing community where interactive exhibits limit this form of engagement.

As I designed ways to incorporate interactive elements into Swimming Upstream, I began with technology. Could screens, or even audience members' cell phones facilitate their involvement in this piece? Further research shows that incorporating personal communication devices, such as cell phones or PDAs, into exhibits and galleries still limits collaboration, and distracts the user from the main idea of the exhibit (vom Lehn, Heath, Hindmarsh, 2.). In addition, these devices pull the user's focus into the device, rather than outward, to the community. As a result, I began looking to performance artists for low-tech ways of involving the audience in the work. The work of Julian Beck, Judith Malina, and the Living Theatre, and Richard Schechner, inspired methods of suggesting actions to the audience that facilitate a connection to the work and theatrical experience. My exploration and understanding of their work, and the work of

other artists in their field, gave a theoretical framework that honed the development of Swimming Upstream.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Julian Beck and Judith Malina are multi-faced artists who began developing a new kind of theatre during the middle of the twentieth century. A variety of artists, ranging from poet Paul Goodman, to painters Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, and playwright Antonin Artaud influenced Beck's work. In 1947, he and Malina founded The Living Theatre. "Their first manifesto said, 'there is no final way of staging any play. (...) And no play will be liked by all. We can only expect that our audience understand and enjoy our purpose, which is that of encouraging the modern poet to write for theatre'" (Schechner, "Living Theatre"). His reference to the modern poet, who at that time included anarchists like Goodman, shows his belief in theatre as a medium that transitioned from the "dramatic texts" to the "performance texts" (Schechner, "Humanism," 31-32).

The Living Theatre based their process in several spiritual methodologies, including I Ching, Kabbalah, and Tantric and Hasidic teachings. Based on the Hasidic teaching that observing Jewish laws and performing mitzvot is like climbing a ladder from the earth to Heaven, the members of The Living Theatre distilled their influences into an eight-rung process that each performance follows (Illustration 1). The chart reflects their use of the eight rungs as the basis for their work Paradise Now.

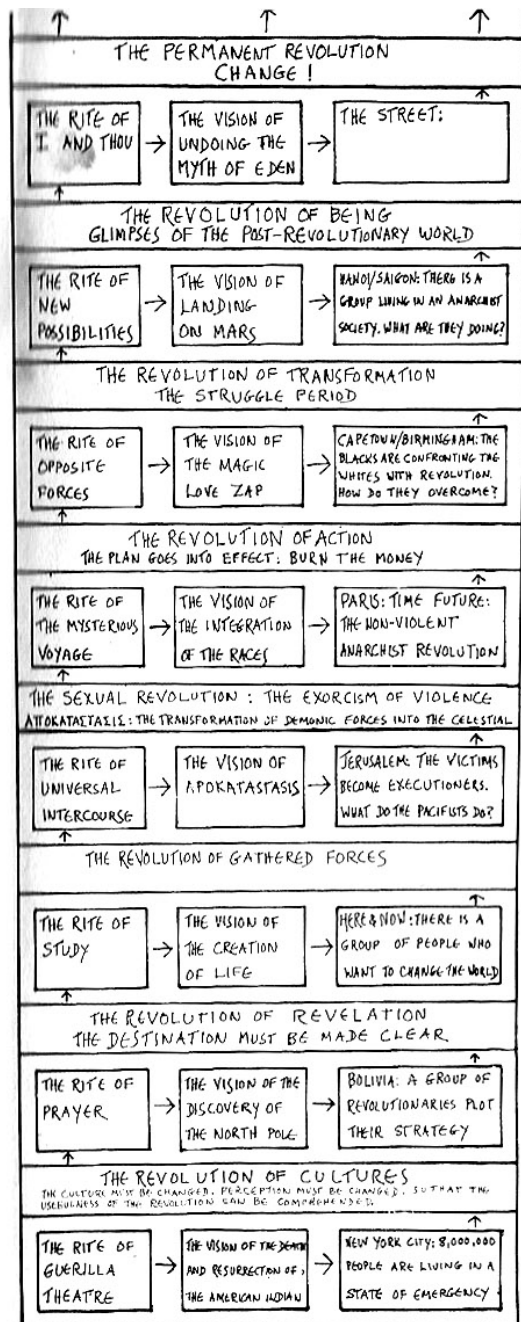


Illustration 1: Eight Rungs: Paradise Now
(Malina, Beck)

ESSENTIAL TRIP IS THE VOYAGE FROM THE MANY TO THE ONE

PARADISE NOW

The Living Theatre adaptation of Paradise Now “consist[ed] fundamentally of changing and assaulting the culture so that the people [could] begin to be open to change”

(Malina, Beck, 6). The performance began while spectators were entering the space. Actors interacted with the spectators, reciting scripted phrases to individuals. For this performance, a scene could be defined as a segment of the performance that represented a rung. Within each scene, the actors performed a series of rites and visions, like vignettes. The spectators participated in described actions, which included following directions from the actors, and even yoga. “Confrontations exist[ed] at each rung. The actors [gave] the audience the action, which [was] a strategy for overcoming the obstacle” (Malina, Beck, 11). The performance culminated with the actors moving spectators into the street, and performing the final rites and actions in the street as a way of claiming a new theatre for the people.

This action-based approach to theatre aligns with my interest in audience interaction. Richard Schechner describes Beck’s beliefs, saying, “The future of theatre was not in literature, but in action.” (“Living Theatre”). Because much of their work addressed political themes, they encouraged audience interaction as a way of inciting a non-violent revolution. Similarly, I endeavor to use this model to confront the audience, develop relationships, and engage in a way that establishes a dialogue about—in the case of Swimming Upstream—identity and sexuality beyond the walls of the theatre.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SWIMMING UPSTREAM

The performance experience includes five scenes, which have been excerpted from the full script of Swimming Upstream (Appendix A). When you see the show, you will experience one of four paths: globospermia, aspermia, low motility, or spermatozoon.

You approach the Oscar Brockett Theatre. Inside the door, an actor, wearing a lab coat, invites you to choose a “flagellum tag” (wristband) from one of three jars, each labeled with a characteristic of a competitor. Choose a wristband from the jar labeled with the characteristic that best represents you. Six characteristics are split between the two doors, and they include: Aerodynamic, Hardy, Good Sport, Cunning, Ruthless, Stealthy. You take a seat.

A man sits on stage, masked by pillows and a low mirror. He is masturbating. When the house lights dim, the actors in lab coats come onto the stage and address you:

“You are all sperm. The goal of the sperm and egg is to make a baby. This performance will result in the creation of a zygote. You will run the race together, but only one, if any, will win.”

The scripted portion of the performance begins, and you watch scenes one and two (Appendix A). Following scene two, Coach Gametes remains on stage and addresses the audience. He asks you to introduce yourself to the people sitting around you. Then, he informs you that most of these people, including you, will not even live to escape the scrotum. He tells you to check your flagellum tag, and asks whose tag says “globospermia.” One of the actors in the lab coat defines this condition. Coach Gametes announces that audience members with globospermia are the sperm who did not live to get ejaculated out of the scrotum. Coach starts the actors on warm-up exercises. While they continue their routine, he talks to you and the other audience sperm about maturing into a sperm who is ready to run The Race. He picks audience members at random, suggesting that they have a question to ask him. Coach hands the audience member a card, and he or she asks a question (Appendix A, 14-17).

Scenes four, and 4/5 Interlude commence on the stage. Following scene 4/5 Interlude, Coach Gametes returns to the stage. He updates you on your progress in the

race, and asks you to check your flagellum tag. He lists “aspermia” and “low motility.” The actor in the lab coat defines these conditions. Coach informs you that audience members/sperm with these conditions have also died on their quest towards the egg. Again, an actor in a lab coat defines the conditions.

Scene five begins on stage. Towards the end of the scene, all of the sperm on stage reveal that they are homosexuals, and are not interested in fertilizing an egg. Pamela Glanderson, one of the eggs, becomes aware of the audience members/sperm, and asks if any of you can fertilize her. When Coach informs her that all of the audience members/sperm are dead, Gina disagrees, reminding him that the actors at the start of the show ensured that the performance would result in the fertilization of a zygote. All of the actors on stage implore the audience members/sperm to check their flagellum tags. If your flagellum tag says “spermatozoon,” then you are still alive. You notice that your flagellum tag says “spermatozoon.” You raise your hand, and they invite you to the stage. You become a character who is included in the remaining scripted portion of the show, and are included in the curtain call.

Chapter 2: Gestation: The Development of the Experience

According to Schechner, "The emphasis in making a performance text is on systems of relationships: confrontations, or otherwise, among words, gestures, performers, space, spectators, music, light—whatever happens on stage" ("Humanism" 32). From the conception of this piece, I was aware that developing these relationships in a seamless way was, for me, both the challenge and relevance of this piece.

DESIGN AND THE WRITING PROCESS

Several years passed between my first concept of Harold, the gay sperm, and work on the script that I developed for this thesis. I began writing a full-length script of this story fewer than two years before the performance that is referenced in this paper, and spent a semester focusing on the development of the script in an independent study with Kirk Lynn. Lynn is an artistic director and writer with the Rude Mechanicals, an Austin-based company that creates collaborative new work. My biggest challenge in advancing the script was identifying and writing towards the main idea of the story.

From the start, I wanted the full script to alternate between the human and anatomical (body) worlds in order to tell the stories of J.R., the straight human male, and Harold, his gay sperm. When I presented the project to my peers, the first question asked was, "Does the sperm have to be gay?"

The sexuality of the sperm is an important inciting action for the story. If Harold were not gay, then we would not have a story. In addition, portraying the main, homosexual character as a non-human figure was an important element, as this distances the character from audience members' preconceived biases towards homosexuals. We all know how to judge a human being who is different. However, we do not have pre-

programmed tendencies against foreign homosexual organisms, or, in the case of the live performance, a puppet.

Throughout the writing process, I had a tendency to let J.R. and Harold be the most passive characters on the page, while the supporting characters drove the scene. Kirk Lynn and I had many discussions about the role of a passive lead. If the lead does not say much, and reacts to the influences of his environment, then I have to make certain that he is growing and journeying towards the main idea of the work. As a storyteller, I think in terms of titles. Focusing on a main idea helped me move the story forward from the initial set up.

The design process was an important element of my writing process. My understanding and visualization of design while writing was a driving force that propelled the story forward. Design choices, consideration of the overall experience, and artist's intent were integral to the development of the script. For example, I identified fluorescent lighting as a motif that would emphasize the sterile nature of J.R.'s relationship with his wife, and Harold's relationship with the eggs that he is yet to meet. Exploring ways to incorporate fluorescent lighting into the set encouraged me to identify moments of high contrast in the plot. This would allow me to design in fluorescent lighting as a high contrast to the warm lighting inside the body. Using lighting as the seed, I generated the idea of Harold ending *The Running of Sperm* in a test tube, a shock to both his and the audience's senses. This location and the scenes that occur here are requisite to revealing Harold's true desires, against the foil of Anders. When I applied the design process to the writing, I found that the generative process depended on the designed locations inherent to the script, which moved the process forward.

DESIGNING THIS WORLD

As the lead designer of this piece, I generated and guided the overall look of the world, including providing renderings, drafting, research and sketches to the other artists and craftspeople with whom I partnered to create the performance.

Set Design

After I had a working script of the performance excerpt, I looked at the performance as a designer and director, and endeavored to develop a set that solved the problems of the show. The biggest challenges for the set included creating a world that could alternate between representing the inside of the body and the human world, and finding architecture that was flexible enough to convey many locations within the body while working within the logistical confines of a festival.

While I wrote the script, I envisioned the world of the body as soft, organic, and flexible; relating to my fibers background. The work of artists Emily Nachison and Shannon South inspired my design for the set. Nachison's piece, "The White Room Installation," exemplified the characteristics of the anatomical world, while incorporating found objects that could transform for the scenes in the human world (Figures 1 and 2). Similarly, Shannon South's doily lamps aligned with this aesthetic, as they used light and craft to transform a found material into something that was both architectural and organic (Figure 3). The relationship between found materials and the human world, and organic shapes and textures, and the anatomical world solved the problem of creating a set in which both worlds could exist.



Figure 1: The White Room Installation, by Emily Nachison¹



Figure 2: The White Room Installation, by Emily Nachison²



Figure 3: Upcycled Doily Lamp, by Shannon South³

The primary locations that must occur on this set include Ruby's home office and a test tube in the human world; the weight room and practice fields in the male body; and the Eggs' lair in the female body. I tried to find the one element or motif that would associate that moment on the set with the location that we needed. For example, the characteristics of confined, sterile, and suspended defined the test tube setting in scene four. I started with a platform, combining a raised architecture with lighting to emulate a cold, elevated, confined space. In addition, in scene two, I identified the need for something mobile, manufactured and used, and proportionally large to represent the egg simulator. The doily lamps had inspired glowing orbs that would hang from the grid of the theatre to represent something ambiguously anatomical—eggs, testicles, blood cells, etc. We could rig one of the orbs to fly into the stage during the scene. The texture of the orb related to the facsimile of the eggs, but the ability of the orb to pulsate and glow, and the appearance of wires protruding from cracks in the object related to the needs of

the simulator prop. My preliminary design rendering for the performance set shows the translation of the research and script needs into the set (Illustrations 2 and 3).

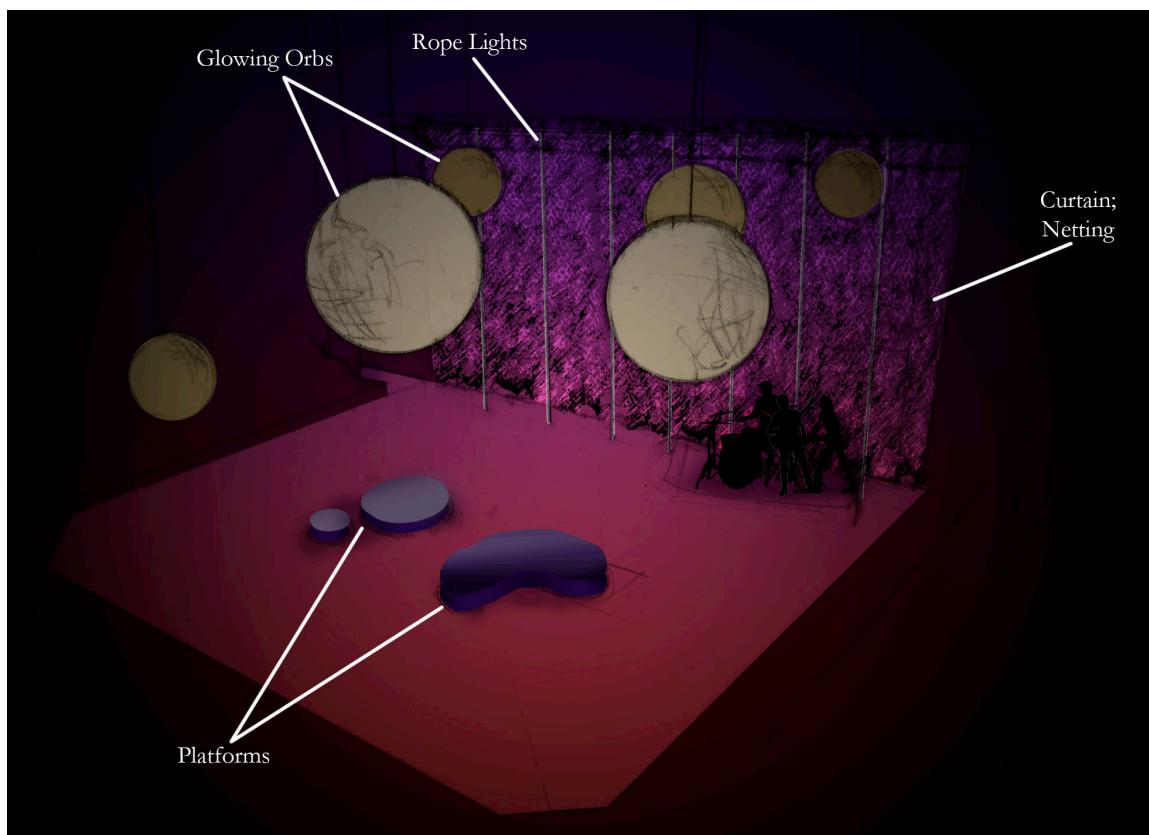


Illustration 2: Preliminary Set Rendering, Scene 1, by Ilana Marks

At the top of the show, backlighting would illuminate the curtain that extended across the proscenium to emulate a modern-style drape pulled across a full window. The orbs and lighting would create a warm, yellow interior for Ruby's home office.

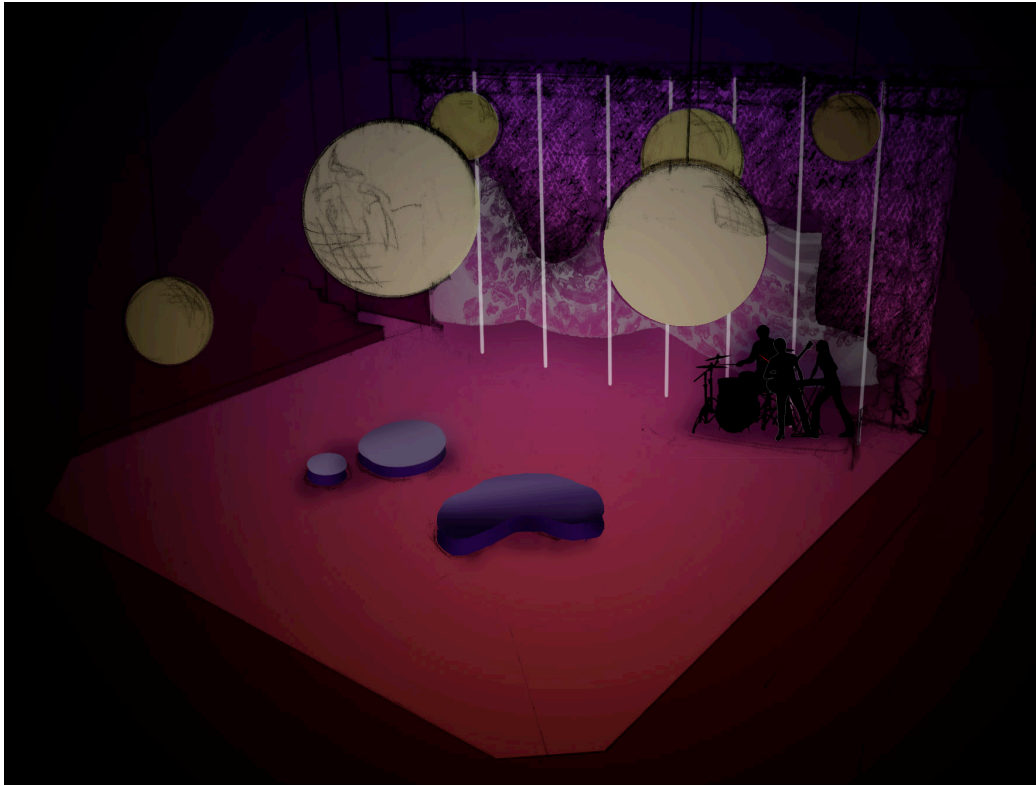


Illustration 3: Preliminary Set Rendering, Scenes 2-5, by Ilana Marks

After scene one, crew in the grid would raise the curtain, which would gather unevenly into organic, hanging shapes, based on a mechanism similar to a Roman Shade. The raised curtain would reveal a stretched screen upstage of the proscenium. Video content would be projected on this surface for the duration of the show. The change in the curtain and introduction of video footage would combine with lighting to usher us into the body. Scene four, which occurs in the test tube, would occur on the large, round platform. The vertical rope lights would combine with fluorescent lighting to create the sterile, vertical world of the test tube.

I generated a floor plan from these renderings, and worked with a technical director and several set builders to realize this set. The version used in the production simplified the large upstage curtain to a gathered border with the rope light woven into

the border. Over the course of three performances, we explored two different options for the projection surface. During the first show, we hung a filled scrim upstage of the border. The scrim was trimmed five feet above the floor, with the band visible upstage of the proscenium. For the second and third performances, I cut most of the projections (see Integrating Media, 21-22). Without content on it, the large filled scrim hanging across the proscenium would have become a very apparent element that pulled audience focus and expectation. For the second and third performances, I replaced the filled scrim with a portable projection screen for the remaining video content (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Swimming Upstream Set, Performance 2⁴

Puppet Design

The Swimming Upstream script portrayed exaggerated characters, environments, and events that not only do not exist in the real world, but defy physics and reality in a way that best exists in an animated medium. The animated nature of the puppetry medium matched the animated quality of the script.

I led two other designers in the design of the puppets. We explored several styles of puppets, but decided to create hand and rod puppets. These puppets fit well with this performance because they can exist outside of a puppet theatre; they have detailed eyes and features that allow the audience to perceive and connect with the soul of the character; and they allow a dexterity that makes the motion of a sperm tail possible. I created preliminary sketches for each of the characters that was going to be realized as a puppet (Appendix B, Illustration 4). I gave these sketches to Christina Yoo and Ryan Andrus, who translated them into renderings for the puppet builders (Appendix B, Illustrations 5, 6, and 7). As the lead designer, I spent a lot of time close-questioning the choices that our team of designers and puppet builders was making. For example, Chris designed Harold to wear a lifesaver around his neck. I interrogated this choice, as this accessory communicates a physical weakness. Harold is actually a very good athlete. This examination encouraged us to consider other costume options for Harold. We decided on a letterman jacket, which I designed to represent his reputation as the “All-American Sperm (Appendix B, Figure 11).” In addition, one of the other designers suggested covering the puppets in Antron fleece because the Jim Henson Company uses this material on their puppets. I agreed that this material can give a good neutral skin, but encouraged the members of the team to consider other skin materials that might feel more relevant to the sperm. We decided to cover the sperm puppets with flocking glue, which gives a rubbery texture, and to cover the eggs with flocking, which gives a velvety

texture. Every member of the design and production team was important to producing the puppets. I enjoyed the role of leading and focusing the team, as well as giving sketches, research, workshops, and other information and artifacts that brought us to the best solution for the non-human characters.

Costume Design

Because the puppets do not exist within the frame of a puppet theatre or camera, I knew that, and intended for, the puppeteers would be visible. Many performances that include visible puppeteers clothe the puppeteers in all black to neutralize their appearance. In the Broadway play, Avenue Q, the puppeteers wear all black clothing that relates to their puppet characters. For example, the person who puppets Kate Monster, a preppy female character, wears a black, fitted sweater, and a skirt (Figure 5). This costume choice acknowledges the presence of the puppeteers, while still trying to neutralize their appearance.



Figure 5: Avenue Q Puppeteers⁵

For our performance, I did not default to clothing the puppeteers in black because I was not certain that black would be a neutral in our set. I wanted to explore visually relating the puppeteers to the puppets because the audience was aware of the puppeteers. On the spectrum ranging from black body suits to fully costumed, the puppeteers for Swimming Upstream were located near the costumes for Avenue Q. Initially, I pulled costumes that related the puppeteer to the color palette of his or her puppet. However, the variety of colors neither unified, nor neutralized the puppeteers. For our first performance, I had the puppeteers wear black bottoms with a colored top that matched the palette of their puppets. The clothing items also matched the character of the puppets. For example, the puppeteer for Harold wore black athletic pants and a blue, rugby stripe shirt (Figure 6). This related to the blue color palette that represented Harold, and related the puppeteer to Harold's athleticism.



Figure 6: Costume for Harold's Puppeteer, Performance 1⁶

The puppeteers in this piece were actors who were learning puppetry for the first time. Throughout the rehearsal process, we continued to work towards achieving the balance of the puppeteer as facilitator for the puppet, rather than actor along side the puppet. During the first performance, the puppeteers were taking focus from the puppets. The colorful tops further pulled the audience focus to the puppeteers instead of the puppets. For the second and third performances, each puppeteer added a black short-sleeved top over a long-sleeved colored top. The costumes were still in the style of the puppet, and still referenced the color palette of each puppet. However, the black top and bottoms helped neutralize the puppeteers' appearance (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Costume for Gina's Puppeteer, Performance 2⁷

INTEGRATING MEDIA

This show was both a performance and an attraction. I considered when the audience experience would start, and how the guests would first interact with this world. Multimedia, in the form of projected video content, was the medium for acclimating and enhancing the world for the audience. For example, after choosing his or her role, the audience member would enter the theatre and choose his seat. On the projection surface at the proscenium, vignettes introducing the characters and the world would be playing. The vignettes would include the opening to *Ovarywatch*, starring Pamela Anderson, and a World War I-style newsreel showing the advancement of the army of eggs on the heroic

sperm. A total of twelve vignettes spanning ten minutes would loop until the house lights dimmed.

Once the performance began, the entire theatre would become projection surfaces for the video. The media would combine seamlessly with the lighting to enhance the textures of the world—subtle neurons firing, sperm swimming, cells passing. During scene three, the entire stage would transform into an educational video. We would use lighting to desaturate everything, including the set and audience. Projectors rigged at multiple angles around the theatre would project onto the walls, floor, and proscenium. Animated diagrams of sperm swimming through the body would project downwards so that the actors on stage would become more figures in the educational video. The video content would act as an extension of the lighting and set in a way that fully integrated the multimedia with the physical.

Much of this video content did not appear in the performance. A projection artist was part of the collaboration, and was tasked with creating the content listed above. However, the content produced did not fulfill that needs of the performance, and I made the decision to cut this element during the allotted technical rehearsal time. We maintained the animation created to support the educational video that is scripted in scene three. In future iterations of this piece, I would work towards pushing the idea of transforming the entire playing space into a projection surface in a way that the multimedia becomes integral to the physical existence of the piece.

MUSIC

Similar to the choice to include puppetry and multimedia, incorporating music was important to enhancing the world of the play. None of the elements of the play are

purely realistic, including the human world. Music was an appropriate way to develop the unique, foreign, and quirky nature of the play.

I considered many different styles of music, and researched the genres within musical theatre before I decided that the music for Swimming Upstream needed to be contemporary, encompassing rock, jazz, and pop. During the first meeting with John Michael Hunt, the composer for this performance, I gave him a CD of songs that illustrated different musical qualities that were important to the sound of the world (Appendix C, Table 2). We discussed the challenge of composing music that evoked the sounds and rhythms of the body.

John Michael read the script and composed some samples of music that represented his approach to the piece. We used these samples as the basis of our conversation, and addressed the relationships between the thematic content of the songs and the music. I gave him an outline that listed the songs in the script excerpt, as well as the characters who would be singing, and the inspiration for the sound of the song (Appendix C, Table 3). The actors were already cast when John Michael began writing the music. He met with the musicians and wrote the music to match their technical skills and strengths. For example, Jennifer Adams, who played Ruby, was an accomplished singer with a strong belting range. In *Monkey Business*, we explored rooting her theme in jazz to highlight her age and experience. After working with the actress, John Michael was able to take the jazz inspiration for Ruby's sound, and combine this with Jennifer's strengths to create a jazz/funk melody to represent Ruby. Because I have a musical background, and was able to approach John Michael with research that conveyed information about the sound of the world, we shared a vocabulary at the start of the collaboration.

Artists from different mediums approach collaboration in different ways, and with different contexts. During the process of collaborating, I found that both the composer and I had different expectations and needs that had to be addressed. When we became aware that the collaboration had become unbalanced in a way that limited our communication, we addressed expectations that were unreasonable or were not being met. The development of our process, vocabulary, and problem solving approach was important to the facilitation of this collaboration.

THE REHEARSAL & DIRECTING PROCESS

While I was working on the independent study of the script with Kirk Lynn, I began collaborating with a composer. He was attached to the project for almost a year. Eight weeks prior to the opening of the show, he left the project for personal reasons, and John Michael replaced him. The music that the other composer had created up until this point was incomplete and unusable. The collaboration with the new composer began from the start. The compressed timeline influenced our rehearsal schedule (Appendix D, Table 4). I planned our rehearsals during February to focus on text, puppetry, and blocking. The deadline for John Michael to complete the music was during the first week of March. We would spend the first part of March emphasizing the music. Then, we would have one week to put all of the pieces back together, and tech the show.

We began the rehearsal process with a read through. All members of the design and construction team attended the read through. We were in between composers at this time.

Caroline Reck, an accomplished puppeteer, visited our second rehearsal to give the puppeteers a foundation in puppetry (Figures 8 and 9). I made a sock puppet with a rigid mouth for each actor. Using these, Caroline demonstrated:

- Focus: Where are the puppet's eyes looking? Where are the puppeteer's eyes looking?
- Breath: Breathing to start a motion; Instilling the puppet with a sense of life
- Motion and Stillness:
 - Resting state, a state of stillness
 - Levels
 - The Wind Up
 - Necessity of Movement
 - Walk Cycle
- Tension: Build tension relative to other characters
 - i.e. – the amount of closing the mouth tightly
- Gravity



Figure 8: Demonstrating Levels: Caroline Reck shows the importance of levels⁸



Figure 9: Actors with Guest Puppeteer, Caroline Reck⁹

After using the first two rehearsals to give a foundation and context for the whole process, I analyzed each scene and estimated the number of rehearsals that I would need to work with the actors on the text and the blocking. I used the first rehearsal for each scene as a diagnostic to confirm or alter the initial estimates. Scene one, which features human characters, progressed faster than expected. Scene five, which includes all of the actors and all of the puppets, moved more slowly than I anticipated. I started each rehearsal by welcoming the actors into the room, and giving them an overview of how we were going to use our time during that rehearsal. I updated them on any issues or news. Then, we would spend 5-10 minutes warming up. Occasionally, I invited the actors to lead the warm up.

My biggest challenges as a director were making certain that I was giving the actors playable actions that supported the main idea of the section, communicating blocking, and maintaining a balance in all of the areas of the script. For example, I

invited Scott Kanoff, a director and directing faculty, to sit in on a rehearsal because I felt that one of the actors was making the choices that he thought were the right answers, not the choices that his character would make based on the given circumstances. Scott clarified the main idea of the scene, and used this information to simplify the actor's objective and playable actions. This cleared the actor's process so that he could make more specific acting choices. In focusing on the character's objective during a moment in the scene, I gave the actor a direction that caused him to lose sight of the overall objective of the scene. This had caused the initial problem. This piece was my directorial debut, and Scott's guidance was integral to refining my communication skills. After this instance, and throughout the remainder of the process, the ability to identify the primary need of a moment or scene improved my ability to communicate the story in a clear, concise, and efficient manner.

When I began blocking the scenes, I struggled with blocking in between moments. For example, during scene five, I gave Gina the objective of always making herself the barrier between Harold and Pamela Glanderson. However, I struggled with allowing the actors a natural interaction without crowding each other, drifting around the stage, or limiting their visibility to the audience. Having never before studied blocking, I initially gave the actors objectives, and hoped that they would derive the blocking from that information. When I realized that they needed more guidance, I gave them points to hit on the stage while they were also moving according to the playable action that I had given. This clarified the blocking some. The blocking in scene five was still choppy as we approached the show. In order to calm the actors, I returned to the main idea of that section of the scene: three organisms are having a conversation. They have their objectives, but, if nothing else, they can stay in one spot and have a conversation. This direction gave a much clearer, though very static, stage picture than any of the previous

directions. The benefit of this approach was the reminder that simpler is better. Honing in on the purpose of the moment, and catering to the natural requirements of the moment, served the play better than calculated choreography.

The stage manager attached to Swimming Upstream was unable to fulfill her role, and left the project. At the time, I felt that I could manage the responsibilities of the stage manager. However, as an inexperienced director, I later realized that a stage manager would have been helpful in crafting the schedule with me so that each area received the rehearsal time required. I dedicated a lot of rehearsal time to the script. This reduced the amount of time that we spent on blocking and puppetry. Because the music was integrated at the end, I was ready to concentrate on blocking and puppetry at the same time that we had to stop to focus solely on music. Also, during the tech process before shows, I was the only person in the room who had the information that each area needed. A stage manager would have been an important person to have to answer questions for the light and soundboard operators, technical director, actors, crew, and house managers. I was busy answering everyone else's questions, and was not able to prepare our whole team for the performance. As a result, our opening performance was somewhat chaotic. While I was able to regroup and better facilitate the preparations before the show for the second and third performances, including a stage manager will be important to future productions that I lead.

INTERACTION WITH THE AUDIENCE

Audience interaction was an integral part of Swimming Upstream because involving the audience expanded the dialogue about identity and sexuality beyond the stage. Exploring sexuality and identity is not unique to J.R. and Harold, but is an important experience and subject matter for all humans. In order for this story to affect

the audience in a more profound way than the words alone were capable of doing, the audience had to be invited to explore with the characters on stage.

The experience that encompasses Swimming Upstream derives from Beck and Schechner's emphasis on action to transition the text into an experience that removes the audience to an unfamiliar point of view. From this space, we begin with my interpretation of The Living Theatre's eight rungs, for Swimming Upstream (Table 1).

Paradise Now	•Swimming Upstream
Rung 1: Rung 1: The Revolution of Cultures	•Audience members choose their roles: Globospermia, Aspermia, or Low Motility
Rung 2: The Revolution of Revolution; The Destination Must be Made Clear	•Actors inform the audience that the performance will result in a zygote.
Rung 3: The Revolution of Gathered Forces	•Scripted scenes 1-2 occur on stage. The audience becomes acquainted with humans and organisms who take a unique approach to their prescribed stations.
Rung 4: The Sexual Revolution: The Exorcism of Violence	•After scripted scenes 2, 3, and 4, Coach Gametes addresses the audience, informs them of their progress in the race, and tells them who, according to the condition written on his or her wristband, has died.
Rung 5: The Revolution of Action	
Rung 6: The Revolution of Transformation; The Struggle Period	
Rung 7: The Revolution of Being; Glimpse into the Post-Revolutionary World	•The actors, as their characters, ask for an audience member who is still alive. The audience member whose wristband says, "Spermatazoon" acknowledges him or herself.
Rung 8: The Permanent Revolution	•The audience member agrees to fertilize Pamela Glanderson.

Table 1: Eight Rungs: Swimming Upstream

Designing the structure of the interactive performance was an important storytelling tool. These eight rungs provided a guiding principal that distilled the interface with the audience to the most succinct and significant elements.

Chapter 3: Birth: Reflection on Process

A good friend and mentor used to tell me that I was genetically predisposed to take on big projects. While I have worked to scale projects to my abilities and physical realities, his assessment of my character is true for this project. Swimming Upstream was a very big undertaking. I accomplished my initial goal of creating a fully produced workshop of an excerpt of a script that I wrote, designed, and directed. Approximately 400-450 people saw the show over the course of three performances. We were able to run the excerpt from beginning to end, showing the audience the look, feel, and sound of the story and world. However, one of my strengths in leading this project was also a weakness.

My biggest strength was my attitude. I approached every element, from script to tech with organization, patience, and optimism. After the show closed, I received e-mails from all of the actors, as well as members of the design team, who recognized my attitude as an important part of the collaboration. Many commented that they felt comfortable exploring new mediums and unfamiliar methods of acting and designing because I consistently approached them with honest and respectful feedback that showed my confidence in their abilities, and in the process. I can only attribute this strength to my natural disposition, not something taught or learned. My reassurance and persistence made for a positive collaborative environment, but these qualities allowed some members of the collaboration to get to become complacent. In these team members this resulted in poor work commitment at best, or totally unfulfilled obligations at worst.

The strength and uniqueness of the concept for this project, and my attitude easily attracted a large group of designers, craftspeople, actors, and other artists to work on this piece (Appendix E). However, maintaining that initial level of motivation and

involvement was a challenge. The actors were consistently energetic, showing up for every rehearsal prepared and motivated. They were flexible when the collaborators on whom they were depending missed deadlines. Many other members of the team lost motivation as the project continued. While each person was involved in the area that interested him or her, and had set personal goals in that area, several members of the team did not invest themselves as fully as they had originally promised. These members of the team did not take ownership of their role, and I spent a lot of time trying to determine ways to reinvigorate their investment. The next time I create a work of this scale, I will preempt this problem by maintaining stricter deadlines and reiterating expectations more often, rather than assuming that team members understand, and will perform to, my expectations. Because I produced this performance, I will keep the lessons that I learned about identifying collaborators that better align with my style of working and expectations in mind as I am seeking future partners.

Conclusion

Swimming Upstream succeeded in proving to me a personal creative process that allowed me to incorporate my diverse skill sets. Unlike previous experiences, in which I struggled to fit every medium that I loved into one creative space, this piece challenged me to investigate the necessity and importance of each element employed to animate and produce the narrative. Whether I develop future work in one medium or multiple, this experience has helped me to establish a way of naturally merging my skills and interests to tell stories in a multifaceted way.

Appendix A:
**Swimming Upstream Performance Script – Excerpt for 2011 New
Works Festival**

SWIMMING UPSTREAM:
Excerpt for 2011 New Works Festival

A musical
By Ilana Marks

Contact:
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. RUBY ROLLINS, a sexologist who looks so food for her age
that you would never guess she is 72

J.R., a Man's Man in his 30s

HAROLD, the All-American Sperm

COACH GAMETES, the past-his-prime physical education teacher
(Sperm)

ANDERS, the Danish Sperm

GINA, the Egg

PAMELA GLANDERSON, the most flirtatious and voluptuous of all
the eggs

ARMY OF EGGS (2), Pamela's cohorts

SETTINGS

Ruby's home office

Weight Room

Practice Fields

Test Tubes

Uterus

PRODUCTION NOTES

Both the Human and Anatomical worlds exist in the present. Actors will use puppets to bring the non-human characters to life.

EXCERPT

SCENE 1

DR. RUBY ROLLINS' HOME OFFICE.

J.R. sits cross-legged on one side of the stage. A make-up mirror masks much of his bottom half, blocking his hands from view. J.R. is masturbating, using fast, mechanical strokes.

RUBY

(Off-stage)

No, no. You look like a hydraulic for goodness sakes!

RUBY enters.

J.R.

What's wrong with this?

RUBY

J.R. Look how red it is.

J.R.

It's, you know...engorged.

RUBY

That's rope burn, stud. (Beat.) Look, you have to respect your penis. Alright, exercise number two: name him. Go.

J.R.

I respect it.

RUBY

Hold it in your hand, and address him.

(Beat.)

First name that comes to mind. Use that mirror to consider the complete genitals and the testes.

J.R.

(Shrugging)

J.R., Jr.

RUBY

J.R., put your penis where I can see it.

RUBY comes and sits next to him.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Wow. That's a great dick.

J.R.

Thanks, Ruby.

RUBY

Reasonable girth, symmetrical head. Defined perineal ridge. Ladies love that. How do you keep your wife off of you?

J.R.

If only she wanted the big guy as much as she wants his sperm.

RUBY puts her hand on J.R.'S shoulder.

RUBY

Well, if I were her, I'd never put him down. (Beat.) And you're going to name a member like this J.R. Jr.? Come on. Be original! If you want to redeem your sex life, start by asserting your manhood.

J.R.

Fine.

(Thinking.)

Vlad.

RUBY

The Impaler. Good.

J.R.

No. Vlad the Penis.

RUBY

Touche. Well, we'll see if we can get your Vlad to come out at night. And, if your a good pupil, maybe during the day, too.

J.R.

At all would be a start.

RUBY offers J.R. more lubrication and motions for him to continue masturbating. She walks around, peering over her glasses occasionally.

J.R. (CONT'D)

When I saw your website, I really didn't think working with a therapist--

RUBY

Sexologist.

J.R.

Sexologist would be quite like this.

RUBY
No one ever does.

J.R.
(singing)

"MONKEY BUSINESS"

I COULDN'T TELL MY WIFE
AND I SNUCK HERE TODAY
THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH A STRANGER
WOULD SURELY ESTRANGE HER
WHEN OUR SEX LIFE'S IN DISARRAY

J.R. IS FOR "JACK RABBIT"
BECAUSE I'M SO FAST IN BED
FOREPLAY TO EJACULATE
IN ZERO TO EIGHT
I LEAVE HER CATCHING HER BREATH

BUT SEX IS NOT WHAT IT WAS
SHE SAYS I'M TO BLAME
MY SPERM LACK MOTILITY
CONCEIVING'S AN IMPOSSIBILITY
MY WANG HASN'T BEEN THE SAME

RUBY
(Singing)

YOU COME TO ME
IF YOU WANT FACTS
ABOUT ANYTHING FROM AREOLAS
TO BOZACKS

WHILE I DABBLED IN POULTRY SCIENCE
AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
MY EXPERTISE IS ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT
HANDS-ON SEXOLOGY

<START CHORUS>
MY BUSINESS IS MONKEY BUSINESS
MY PASSION'S COPULATION
I'M THE GRANDMA IN YOUR PANTS
ONE-ON-ONE SEX EDUCATION
<END CHORUS>

NOW, THIS ISN'T THERAPY
YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT YOUR COMPULSIONS
BUT, IF YOU LIE ON MY COUCH
THE FOCUS IS CONVULSIONS

ANAL BEADS, CUNNILINGUS
DON'T YOU SEE?
THAT'S WHAT "A-B-C"
MEANS TO ME

OH, I ONCE WAS A FEMINIST
JUST LIKE YOU
BEFORE THAT A LIBERALIST, AN ANARCHIST,
A COMMUNIST, A CUBIST,
EVEN A BASSOONIST

(speaking)
And they have one thing in common...None of
them enjoys sex!

(singing)
THEY DON'T KNOW HOW
TO USE THEIR PARTS
BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO DISTRACTED
BY THEIR KNOW-NOTHING HEARTS

(speaking)
So after two failed marriages, two broken
engagements, a preup, and an annulment, I
said, "No more!" Because, otherwise, I am no
better than the rest of them.

J.R.
Now that we are trying to conceive, everything
I do seems to be wrong. I go too fast--

RUBY
(as if checking off a list)
Yup.

J.R.
Too hard--

RUBY
Yup.

J.R.
Too soon.

RUBY
Yup.

J.R.
And that's not even the half of it!
(singing)

NOW ALL WE DO IS FIGHT
BECAUSE I LIKE TO RIDE MY BIKE
SHE SAYS THAT BANANA SEAT'S
A HAZARD TO MY GAMETES

MY STOMACH IS QUEASY
AND MY HAIR IS GROWING THIN
BECAUSE EVERY WEEK, SHE HAS ME ON A NEW,
SPERM-FRIENDLY HEALTH REGIMEN

THEY SAY THE PROBLEM IS MY SPERM
AND THAT MAY BE TRUE
BUT IF WE COULD GET BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE
I'D FUCK HER SO WELL AND SO OFTEN
SURELY ONE WOULD GET THROUGH

RUBY
I DON'T ADDRESS MARITAL WOES
NOR THINNING HAIR
BUT PUT YOUR TRUST IN ME
WE COULD HAVE QUITE THE AFFAIR

MY SERVICES DON'T COME CHEAP
BUT WHEN WE ARE THROUGH
YOU MAY NOT HAVE A KID
BUT I'LL HAVE MADE A FIRST CLASS LOVER OUT OF YOU

<CHORUS>

RUBY (CONT'D)
Good. I'll see you this time next week.

J.R.
How about this time tomorrow?

RUBY
I don't think you could handle or get away with
that.

J.R.
Our fifth anniversary is in three weeks.
There's only one thing she wants, and she has
already begun shopping.

RUBY
I hear adoption is en vogue these days.

J.R.
(Shaking his head)
Sperm donor.

RUBY
Isn't the traditional gift wood?

J.R.
Exactly. So I'll see you tomorrow.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 2

INT. (WHAT REVEALS TO BE) WEIGHT ROOM

Spotlight on HAROLD standing face-to-face with an egg. The egg is motionless. HAROLD circles the egg from a safe radius. Finally, he takes a deep breath and moves towards the egg.

EGG
Come and get me, you male reproductive cell, you.

HAROLD freezes. Silence. He begins again, slowly.

EGG (CONT'D)
Glide towards me with your--

HAROLD freezes again. Silence. He sneaks forward.

EGG (CONT'D)
--muscular flagellum.

HAROLD sneaks around behind her. He starts out slowly, then sneaks faster. His pace is like ripping off a band-aid. The faster he moves, the faster she talks.

EGG (CONT'D)
What a big head.
Do you have extra chromosomes in your nucleus, or are you just happy to see me?
Penetrate now. We could be one hot, zygotic mess!

HAROLD stands back-to-back with the egg. He inches around to her side. He pulls open a hatch, revealing an interior cavity. The Egg is a simulator.

EGG (CONT'D)
If you really cared about me, you'd penetrate me.

(MORE)

EGG (CONT'D)

You know you want to. If you don't, then the others will.
You might as well get it over with.
Come on, it won't hurt.

HAROLD looks inside the simulator, and begins to hyperventilate as the sound of her voice grows louder and louder.

Finally, he cannot take her heckling anymore and slams the door shut. He wheezes as he catches his breath.

COACH GAMETES
(Off Stage)

Harold?

HAROLD

Feces!

HAROLD scrambles to wrench the door open again.

EGG

What is taking you so long?

HAROLD

Shh!

COACH GAMETES enters. HAROLD stands out of breath, poised to penetrate the egg.

COACH GAMETES

Harold, drills started at half past flaccid.
What are you doing?

HAROLD

(Patting the simulator)

Just getting in a few more reps.

EGG

Do you usually take this long? Would it help if I showed you my granulosa cells?

COACH GAMETES gives HAROLD a skeptical look.

HAROLD

Advanced setting. You know, more of a challenge when she insults you the whole way.

COACH GAMETES

Of course. Good boy.

The door to the Egg begins to ding, like a refrigerator door left open too long, or a car door open while the keys are still in the ignition.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

I can tell you're anxious to get on inside of her.

HAROLD

No!...No, I-I've already done this (mumbled) once before. Actually, Coach Gametes, I was thinking, since today's the day. I really wanted to talk to you, I mean ask you something. I'll just go ahead and shut her down.

COACH GAMETES

Nonsense. Swim on in, one last time. (equiv.)

COACH GAMETES shoves HAROLD into the simulator and follows after him.

The interior of the simulator is snug. COACH GAMETES takes up more of the space. COACH GAMETES settles in and puts his tail around HAROLD.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Feels like home, doesn't she? What's on your mind, son?

HAROLD begins to sweat and gasp for air.

HAROLD

Well, you never ran--

COACH GAMETES

Couldn't. I'm a flat gamete. Can't swim long distances.

HAROLD

Did you ever regret not running?

COACH GAMETES

I'm not a sperm of regrets, Harold. I knew my place was to teach and train the future cycles.

HAROLD

So you never wanted to fertilize an egg?

COACH GAMETES

I wanted to produce the greatest swimmer known
to J.R. (Beat.) The All-American Sperm. And
I found him.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

"ALL-AMERICAN SPERM"

WE'VE HAD A LOT OF REMORSE
THROUGH MUCH INTERCOURSE
WE NEEDED A RECRUIT TO ENDORSE
WHO COULD GET PAST THE LINE OF SCROTAGE
AND, OF COURSE, STAY THE COURSE

<START CHORUS>

BEWARE IF YOU'RE A HYPODERM
AND IF FERTILIZATION IS YOUR CONCERN
DON'T HATE THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
OVULATE FOR THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
OUT OF THE EPIDIDYMIS CAME OUR CHAMPION
VARSITY ALL-STAR IN CHROMOSOME CARRYIN'
DON'T HATE THE ALL AMERICAN SPERM
OVULATE FOR THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
<END CHORUS>

HE'S ALWAYS THE FIRST ONE TO ATTACK
NEITHER MORPHOLOGY, NOR MOTILITY DOES HE LACK
TO OUR FIRST EMBRYO HE'LL LEAD THIS PACK
A TRUE HYMEN TROPHY WINNER
OUR STAR COITER BACK

<CHORUS>

HAROLD

WHAT IF YOU'VE OVER-ESTIMATED
OVER-STATED, OVER-RATED
AND THIS ISN'T WHAT I'M FATED
MAYBE THIS IS ALL IN MY NUCLEUS
BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN END UP MATED

<START BRIDGE>

WHEN ALL HOPE WAS LOST
WHEN THE RIVER OF INTERCOURSE HAD DRIED
AND THE ONLY SEED SPILLED WAS MASS GENOCIDE
YOU EMERGED FROM THE TESTES ALL GLITTERED AND GLOSSED
<END BRIDGE>

<CHORUS>

(spoken; music continues in the
background)

I couldn't be more proud of you if you had
split from my own nucleus. You're a good boy.
Always kept to the straight and narrow.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(Fanning harder)

Oh man.

COACH GAMETES

You've always met my expectations. But today isn't just any race. Those other guys, they're ready to strangle you with your own tail, rip you to pieces. They don't want you to fertilize an egg. They want to make you into mulch to fertilize the intestines. They--

HAROLD

Coach? I'm not worried about the others, I'm worried that I'm not really attracted--

COACH GAMETES

(snapping out of his frenzy)

The point is, it's fertilization or death out there, kid. And accepting that risk, that *challenge* is the only way to live. So, just remember what you want. Rely on those fundamentals. Keep your stroke long and steady. Corkscrews, corkscrews--simple fluid dynamics.

(Beat)

I've always said that you know you've won when you can look me in the eye, and say that you've hunted down that egg. Fertilized her, achieved mitosis.

(Said with increasing speed, in one breath)

Produced a zygote, that becomes an embryo, that grows into a baby, is born naturally, hits a growth spurt early, gets picked varsity, goes to the Olympics, sets a world record, has a long, decorated career, and retires a twenty-four.

(Breath)

'Course, I'm not going to be there this time, so you've just got to win.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 3

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD + EDUCATIONAL VIDEO

HAROLD and a group of jockish sperm stride cockily around what appears to be a football field with only one end zone. They whack each other with their tails.

COACH GAMETES

Alright boys, Insemination Sprints. (Beat.) On the line.

SPERM HAROLD and the other boys line up down the field, facing the end zone.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Rushing the OBGY-End zone. On the count of three. One. (Beat.) Two. (Beat.) Three!

They are off! The boys swim down field, traveling back and forth around the stage in varying choreography, as the narration continues. Video content combines with the live action to create a living 1950's-style educational video.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

We sure mature quickly, don't we? Why, it seems just yesterday that we were microorganisms. Today, we are thicker, stronger, and have hair under our flagellums. Won't be long now before we are making the greatest metamorphosis of our lives.

Ejaculation, it's an exciting time!

COACH GAMETES swims around and takes a good look at the audience. He chooses someone.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

I remember the first time some organism, looked a lot like you, asked me a question like this:

Gives a card to AUDIENCE MEMBER 1.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE 1

Does an erection mean that you have too many sperm?

COACH GAMETES

Good question. Possibly. A man releases over fifty million sperm during ejaculation. If his testes are already full, then those sperm have to go somewhere.

COACH GAMETES hands a card to someone near AUDIENCE MEMBER 1.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE 2

Where do they go?

COACH GAMETES

Glad you asked.

A hush covers the stage. The sperm start equally spaced along stage, but slowly crowd closer and closer together as the tension mounts. The light increases in intensity as the color changes to red, then purple. The overhead lighting dims until the stage is almost black, and only red and purple backlighting shows the silhouette of the huddle of sperm. When the light begins to dim, a chorus of ambient noise builds. The huddle pulls tighter, and tighter, becoming one ritualistic, pulsating body.

Just as the mass appears on the verge of eruption, the sperm wearing the floatie gets forced from the huddle forward. The scene freezes.

Beat. Beat.

Flash of light. A large crash signals the start of the stampede. The sperm spring from the huddle and run from the stage, like Vikings ready to pillage.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Maybe a diagram will help. During emission, sperm move from the epididymis, through the ejaculatory duct, and out the urethra, here. The Point of Ejaculatory Inevitability occurs when the flow of semen becomes involuntary. Beyond this point of no return lies only victory or death.

They elbow, jockey, and flounder. The sperm with floaties and a kickboard falls behind the pack.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

I can tell you have a question, sport.

COACH GAMETES hands a card to
AUDIENCE MEMBER 3.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE 3

Are all sperm the same?

COACH GAMETES

We sure look the same, but don't let that fool you. Some sperm are defective and die immediately. And a few just have trouble finding their way.

COACH GAMETES looks around.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Did I see a flagellum over here? You?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE 4

How can you tell if a sperm is different?

COACH GAMETES

The harsh environment of the female reproductive system separates the sperm from the...other sperm.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE 5

What if all of a man's sperm are floaters?

COACH GAMETES

Don't worry, men can always get better stock if theirs is not good enough. I'll bet you'll never guess where the best sperm come from.

(Beat)

Oh, why this is an easy one! *Denmark*. Their sperm are hardy, donors are willing, and offspring look like famous moving picture actor, Cock Hudson.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 4

INT. GLASS TEST TUBE

HAROLD falls into the test tube with a "ploink." He looks at the glass floor, then lets his eyes follow the wall all the way up to the top. He begins hyperventilating. He bangs on the glass.

HAROLD

(Panicked)

No. No. This is a nocturnal transmission. This isn't real.

He works his way around the tube, banging, looking for some hidden trap door.

Halfway around the tube, he runs into ANDERS and immediately backs away to the opposite side of the tube.

ANDERS is leaning against the wall, doing flagellum curls. He wears a bow tie and aerodynamic, chrome goggles.

ANDERS

And just who might you be?

HAROLD

I'm Harold. Who are--

ANDERS

I haven't heard of you.

HAROLD

You probably have, actually.

ANDERS

Are you special ops? (Beat.) Did the Bureau send you?

HAROLD

What Bureau?

ANDERS

A question only a member of the Semen Bureau of Insemination would ask. Rank?

HAROLD

(Confused)

All-American Sperm...? *Varsity* All-American Sperm.

ANDERS

Mean goo-dth! This is no place for an American!

HAROLD

I'm the only American who should be here. (Beat.) Where are we?

ANDERS

That information is classified.

HAROLD

Who are you?

ANDERS

Classified.

HAROLD

Fine. I'm not leaving until I get answers.

ANDERS

You will never get anything out of me. I am like a Danish liver.

HAROLD

Danish! We didn't ask for backup. Who sent you?

(Beat.)

I know. Classified. You can go back to wherever you came from, because I've got this situation under control.

ANDERS

No can do. This is a one-way tube.

HAROLD

I don't recall seeing any of those in the Swimmers' Ed handbook. Where are we?

ANDERS

I will tell you. But, you should know that, despite your charming cluelessness and obvious physical abilities, I will have to overtake you. (Beat.) This is the artificial insemination.

HAROLD

I've heard tales of this, but-- I just never thought it could be true. Nobody knows where you guys come from, so how did I--?

ANDERS

Oh, is very simple. How do you say?

ANDERS pantomimes a penis cocking, like a pistol, and shooting a sperm into a cup.

ANDERS (CONT'D)

Or, perhaps in your case:

ANDERS pantomimes a penis dribbling a sperm into a cup.

HAROLD

So, this is it? No eggs. Just two sperm in a confined space?

ANDERS

For a time. Then we will be deposited back
into the body, at which time we will be
competition again. (Beat.) How much can you
lift?

HAROLD

Four kidney stones, without a spotter.

ANDERS

Cute.

HAROLD

How fast can you swim a micron?

ANDERS

The time is in the metric. You will not
understand. Your not standardized American
units are under...eh, low?...beneath. But, is
much fast.

ANDERS (CONT'D)

(singing)

"YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING"

AT AN EARLY AGE

I WAS PLUCKED

TRAINED TO BE READY

FOR WHEN YOUR MAN GOT--

(Spoken)

How do you say, "sex-ed?"

(Singing)

I AM PRECISION SHOOTER

HAVE ZE HIGHEST SUCCESS RATIO

I'LL FIND EGG WHETHER ENTRANCE EES INTERCOURSE, MANUAL
OR EVEN ZE--

(Spoken)

How do you call, "oral?"

<START CHORUS>

ENOUGH OF ZEES PANDERS

I'M ZE DANISH SPERM, ANDERS

YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING

I VEAL SUBDUE YOU IF NECESSARY

MY METHODS ARE LEGENDARY

YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING

<END CHORUS>

HAROLD

I KNOW YOU RECOGNIZE MY FACE

IT'S ON EVERY BOTTLE OF GLANDORADE

I'M THE GO TO GAMETE

IF J. R.

EVER GETS LAID

YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT ME FIGURED OUT
BUT I'M MORE THAN A JOCK
I'M THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
AND I RULED HIS COCK

<CHORUS>

DO YOU FEEL IMPERILED?
YOU SHOULD. I'M HAROLD
YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING
AN EGG'S NOT SOMETHING I NEED
COMPARED TO YOUR'S MY SKILLS EXCEED
YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING
<END CHORUS>

HAROLD (CONT'D)

WE MIGHT AS WELL GET COMFORTABLE
AS LONG AS WE'RE STUCK IN THIS CUP

ANDERS

THEY BRING ME HERE TO DO ZEE JOB
BECAUSE YOU'RE KIND CAN'T GET ZEE MISSUS
(Spoken)
Ees ze verd "pregnant?"

HAROLD

(Singing)

WHERE DID I GO?
I'LL DISAPPEAR INTO SHORTCUTS YOU WEREN'T TAUGHT

ANDERS

MY KIND SCHWIM ON ZE LEFT OF ZEE TUBE
I FIND A NEW WAY AROUND THE... ...
(Spoken)

Vagina?

HAROLD

<CHORUS>

AS LONG AS WE HAVE NO ESCAPE
WE MIGHT AS WELL KEEP IN SHAPE
YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING
A FRIENDLY COMPETITION OF SORTS
OF COURSE, I'M UNBEATABLE AT SPORTS
YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM COMING
<END CHORUS>

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I SPEAK THE LANGUAGE
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO HANG

ANDERS

I HAVE ZEE DANISH GASTRIC POSITIONING SYSTEM
I FIND SO MANY EGGS, VEAL BE LIKE... ...UNT GANG BANG.

HAROLD

BUT, YOU'RE A FOREIGNER
WON'T THE BODY ATTACK?

ANDERS

(Thinking)

BUT I AM UNCATCHABLE
I SCHWIM VERY FAST FORWARDS...UNT BACK

HAROLD

(Spoken)

Wait.

Record Scratch.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You can't swim backwards.

ANDERS

Men self-oo-league! Of course I can!

HAROLD

We exist in a viscous substance--semen--which has a low Reynolds Number, which is a dimensionless number that quantifies viscous force. In low R number fluids, like semen, if you wag one tail back and forth, you'll just go backwards and forwards, and not really go anywhere. That's why you have to use corkscrew strokes, but that will only move you forwards, as our tail is not mechanized to turn in a reverse corkscrew to move us backwards.

ANDERS pauses and considers
HAROLD.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Simple fluid dynamics. Or do they not have that in the metric system?

ANDERS

You have well training. Finally, a sperm worthy of my attention.

HAROLD
(singing)
You can't stop me from
coming.

ANDERS
(singing)
You can't stop me from
coming.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 4/5 INTERLUDE

INT. NEUTRAL SPACE

J.R. sit on a dark stage. A
single spot light illuminates him.
He plays the guitar and sings.

J.R.
(singing)
"RIDING THE MILES"
FOUND MYSELF ON A BIKE
NEARLY EVERY SINGLE DAY OF MY LIFE
GOING THE DISTANCE IN SPANDEX
THIGHS GRIPPING TIGHT

GRINDING UP INCLINES
HITTING EACH POTHOLE
THRILL RIDING ON RUMBLE STRIPS
I SHOULD HAVE WORN A HELMET
AND A CUP

NOW MY SPERM COUNT IS NEGATIVE
REPRODUCTION LOST
I SIMULATE SEX WITH ANOTHER
BUT AT WHAT COST?

<CHORUS 1>
THAT'S WHY I'M
RIDING THE MILES
THAT MY CUM WILL NEVER GO
AM I EXHAUSTING THEM HERE
ON MY FIXED GEAR?
WHO COULD KNOW?
<END CHORUS 1>

HAROLD floats on stage.

HAROLD
(singing)
MY IDEAL COUNTERPART
WILL BE A TRUE CONFIDANTE
MY CERTAINTY, MY RAMPART,
THAT'S ALL I EVER WANT

I CAME ON THIS RACE
TOOK A CHANCE ON FINDING
AN ESCAPE ROUTE OR OTHER PATH
IF ANDERS WAS MY TRAP, THEN
I GOT CAUGHT.

NOW I'VE PUSHED AWAY MY ONE SHOT
I'M HERE ALL ALONE
STUCK IN A BODY THAT I UNDERSTAND
BETTER THAN MY OWN

<CHORUS 2>
THAT'S WHY I'M
SWIMMING THE MILES
THAT MY DREAMS WILL NEVER KNOW
AM I EXHAUSTING THEM HERE
SILENCED BY FEAR?
WHO COULD KNOW?
<END CHORUS 2>

GINA floats on stage.

GINA
(singing)
AUTONOMIC FUNCTIONS
MAKE THIS WORLD SO OUT OF MY CONTROL
SYSTEMS THAT SUSTAIN HER ARE MY PRISON
SLOWLY ABSORBING BITS OF MY CYTOSOL

THE BODY FORGOT
THE IMPORTANCE OF
COMPATIBILITY AND
THE POWER OF PREFERENCE
I HAVE NOT

IF I COULD PAIR EACH GAMETE
WITH A SUITABLE MATE
WE COULD SOLVE FERTILIZATION
AND ENSURE OUR FATES

<CHORUS 3>
THAT'S WHY I'M
PLANNING THE MILES
SO I CAN MAKE AN EMBRYO
IS THIS WORK TAKING ME NEAR
MY HOPE AND FEAR?
WHO COULD KNOW?
<END CHORUS 3>

ALL
IF THERE'S A REMEDY
YOU NAME IT AND I'VE TRIED

HAROLD, GINA, and ANDERS exit.

J.R.
(singing)

<CHORUS 1>
THAT'S WHY I'M
RIDING THE MILES
THAT MY CUM WILL NEVER GO
AM I EXHAUSTING THEM HERE
ON MY FIXED GEAR?
WHO COULD KNOW?
<END CHORUS 1>

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 5

INT. FEMALE BODY

GINA and PAMELA GLANDERSON sit on
the round platform.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
Are you listening, Gina? Okay, so there we'll
be. I'll sache up to him and--

GINA
He should always make the first move. No sperm
wants the whole sack if you are giving away the
amniotic fluid for free.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
He'll glide toward me, and grab me with his
muscular, throbbing flaggellum. And in the
moment before we become one hot, zygotic mess,
he'll look into my eyes and say--

HAROLD on the other side of the
stage.

HAROLD
I don't think I can do this. I can't do this.

He paces back and forth.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
If he were here, I'd just have to look him in
the eyes and say, "Coach, I ran. I did my
best. And...I discovered a different path. A
different me, you know? I went out for the
Hymen Trophy, and brought back the Mr.
Cunnilinguality Award instead. But a win is a
win, regardless of the team, right? Coach?"
Who am I kidding? Fertilization or death.
Anders knows that, too. He's probably in an
egg by now, anyways. Just forget it.

EGGS on the other side of the stage.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
I'd prefer a gamete with a long tail. I mean,
I'll absorb anything--

GINA
I know.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
--but, I'd prefer a big one.

GINA
There's more to sperm than endowment, Pamela.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
What's wrong with wanting the best that DNA can
buy?

HAROLD on the other side of the stage.

HAROLD
Remember, these eggs are defenseless and
pining. They'll take whatever they can get.
You don't have to like it. Don't even think
about it. Just get it over with and...that
will be it. (Beat.) The end.

EGGS on the other side of the stage.

GINA
This is not how it should work. How often do
we watch this race?

PAMELA GLANDERSON
Not much lately.

GINA
And how often do we meet any of these guys?
Last race, they had over fifty million sperm
register, and only one actually made it here.
Farrah ran off with him immediately. She
didn't even know his name.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
Mm! She didn't have to. Did you see the head
on that boy? You know what they say, the
bigger the head, the bigger the--

GINA
Yeah, but where is she now? Stuck in a
lifeless mitosis, until they dissolve with the
rest of the forgotten cycles.

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

(Beat.)

You put in all this time waiting,
preparing...bedazzling. Don't you want to know
that when you finally get your chance, you are
getting the guy who will get the job done?

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Yeah, maybe you're--

HAROLD enters their part of the
stage. HAROLD and PAMELA make
eye contact.

PAMELA GLANDERSON (CONT'D)

--fever. One-oh-one-point-six!

GINA sees HAROLD.

GINA

Stop right there.

HAROLD

Look, I know that you are defenseless--

GINA

Swim back, I know tai kwond ovum.

HAROLD

You think that a sperm like me can make all of
your dreams come true--

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Yes, please!

GINA

(whispering loudly to PAMELA)

Remember what we talked about. Dating before
mating.

HAROLD

What was that?

GINA

Please maintain a respectable distance.

HAROLD

Don't you want me to fertilize you?

GINA

No!

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Yes!

GINA

Maybe.

(to PAMELA)

We don't know anything about him. He could be a miscarriage just waiting to happen.

HAROLD

I think you're getting ahead of yourself.

GINA

I'll be the judge of that.

(pulling out a clipboard)

If you don't mind my asking you a few questions. One--

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Are you in the market for an immediate mate? My name is Pamela Glanderson. I have size 44 double mu granulosa cells and the best corpus luteum that DNA can buy?

HAROLD

That's a very generous offer. I'm...just not sure you're my type.

PAMELA GLANDERSON

(chuckle)

Yes, I am.

HAROLD

The organism that I'm interested in is a little less...round.

PAMELA GLANDERSON

I should absorb you just for that!

PAMELA rushes at HAROLD, who dodges her.

GINA

(to PAMELA)

Calm down. Let me do the preliminary compatibility analysis. Then, we can see if he is a match, and I will arrange a mini-date.

PAMELA exits. GINA turns to HAROLD and frowns.

GINA (CONT'D)

Either you're the most enlightened sperm I've ever met, or you're a few chromosomes short of a full DNA strand.

HAROLD

I have exactly twenty three chromosomes. Very few of which are for recessive traits. Why?

HAROLD

I have exactly twenty three chromosomes. Very few of which are for recessive traits. Why?

GINA

You just moved out of the way of Pamela Glanderson. Only a sperm who's mutated would do that.

HAROLD

Maybe you're the mutant. You're the one who is asking me all of these questions.

GINA

You happen to be speaking to the founding member of the Gamete Liberation Organization.

HAROLD

Liberation?

GINA

Yes, right to preference. And our cardinal rule is "dating before mating."

She shows him her button.

HAROLD

Really?

GINA

It says so in our bylaws. We could not fertilize right now if we wanted to. (Beat.) Do you?

HAROLD

This sort of thing would not float in the scrotum. Especially not for me. If Coach found out--

GINA

See? That kind of micro-mindedness is exactly what I am combatting. I used to get panic attacks every intercourse because I was so anxious about..you know, with...with the wrong organism. (Beat.) I've never told anyone that before.

HAROLD

I hyperventilate!

GINA

Me too! And my membrane gets all sweaty.

HAROLD

Yeah.

GINA

That's not a very attractive image for you.

HAROLD

I think I'm claustrophobic. The idea of penetrating an egg is like getting stuck in a mucus mold!

(Beat.)

I didn't mean you. I think you're--

GINA

You said I was a mutant.

HAROLD

I don't think you're a mutant.

GINA

Thanks. I don't think you're mutated.

(Beat.)

In the Gamete Liberation Organization, we believe not every sperm is meant to fertilize every egg.

HAROLD

I'm so relieved--

GINA

One perfect sperm exists for each egg. (Beat.)
Just a few more questions.

(singing)

"MY IDEAL MATCH"

THINK OF YOUR PERFECT MATE
WHAT DO YOU ENVISION?
DOES THE ONE YOU PENETRATE
EXEMPLIFY VERSATILITY,
UNIQUENESS, AND PRECISION?

HAROLD

(Spoken)

Funny you should ask.

GINA

(Spoken)

These are important questions.

(Singing)

IF THE TESTES COLLAPSE,
AND EVERYONE'S IN DREAD,
DO I EVEN HAVE TO ASK?
WOULD YOU SAVE ANOTHER SPERM
OR YOUR FAVORITE LITTLE EGG?

HAROLD

(Spoken)

What other sperm?! How did you get to the testes?

GINA

(Spoken)

It's hypothetical.

(Singing)

WHAT'S YOUR FANTASY?

THE WILDEST ACT YOU'VE COMMITTED?

HAVE YOU HAD FEELINGS FOR SOMEONE SUBSTANTIALLY?

ARE THESE FEELINGS NEW FOR YOU, TOO?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL INHIBITED.

HAROLD

(Spoken)

Inhibited? What would you know?

GINA

I can see that you're holding back.

HAROLD

(Singing)

DON'T MAKE ME YOUR FRIEND

OR EXTEND THIS INTERVIEW

I HOPE YOU CAN COMPREHEND

THAT DESPITE YOUR BELIEFS

I AM NOT THE ONE FOR YOU.

GINA

But, Harold. The compatibility on paper--

HAROLD shakes his head.

GINA (CONT'D)

You're a haploid and I'm a haploid. What's wrong with wanting to be a whole-ploid?

HAROLD

Gina,

(singing)

"RIGING THE MILES (REPRISE)"

MY IDEAL COUNTERPART

WILL BE A TRUE CONFIDANTE

MY CERTAINTY, MY RAMPART,

MY MISSING PIECE, MY DUET,

THAT'S ALL I EVER WANT

(spoken)

GINA

I want that, too. That's what makes us different from the others.

(Beat.)

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

Are you concerned about the success ratio of my match making approach? You are my first client, so you can feel confident knowing that the success of this program is in your flagellum!

HAROLD

I'm attracted to another organism.

GINA

But, I thought you didn't want her. (Beat.) I hope that you and Pamela will be very happy. I'm sure that you'll make a very...voluptuous zygote.

HAROLD

No, not Pamela.

(ANDERS enters)

Him!

ANDERS enters. He and HAROLD make eye contact. They approach slowly.

ANDERS

I see that you have found the egg.

HAROLD

I did.

ANDERS

I am proven weak. I shall dissolve honorably. Do not worry about me. I will be here, degrading, peacefully.

GINA

Stop right there!

(to HAROLD)

Do you know this guy?

HAROLD starts to respond.

ANDERS

Slowly dissolving...away.

HAROLD

But, Anders, we are still haploids.

ANDERS

Oh. Did you just arrive?

HAROLD

No. (Beat.) What took you so long?

ANDERS

I had to find my path.

HAROLD

Me, too.

They embrace.

HAROLD & ANDERS

(singing)

"RIDING THE MILES (REPRISE)"

MY IDEAL COUNTERPART

WILL BE A TRUE CONFIDANTE

MY CERTAINTY, MY RAMPART,

MY MISSING PIECE, MY DUET,

THAT'S ALL I EVER WANT

GINA

(ignoring ANDERS)

I have decided that I am still open to
fertilization with you. We can make this work.

HAROLD

Why would you want to do that?

GINA

How else will we live? If you don't fertilize
me, Pamela will be after you like a game of
Mrs. Pac Hy-Man. And she is nothing compared
to Dolly and Marilyn. They're viral.

HAROLD

We can explore the rest of the body.

GINA

(shaking her head)

You might end up enslaved somewhere else. Have
you heard what goes on in the intestines?

ANDERS

Beh-frookt-ning ell er dud. Fertilization or
death.

ANDERS and HAROLD look at each
other, then start moving towards
GINA.

GINA

Wait! I make the exception for one of you. I
still have a reputation to protect.

ANDERS

But, zee Danish sperm is a credit to any
resume.

GINA

Not if your chromosomes combine with his
chromosomes and mine, and we end up with a
trisomal zygote.

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

They call that a molar pregnancy. *Mole-argh.*
Those don't live to birth.

(Beat.)

I might be able to talk to a couple of eggs.
Set up a mixer.

A moment of silent realization.
Then, the ground begins to shake.
PAMELA GLANDERSON and two giant
eggs descend upon the scene.
ANDERS begins to shake. He
slinks backwards.

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Looks like I arrived just in time. Mm! Fresh
gamete.

(to GINA)

Gina, honey, what you said really made an
impression on me.

GINA

Really?

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Of course. (Beat.) I still want that one.
(pointing to HAROLD)
You can keep the slow one for yourself.

HAROLD

He's not slow. He's Danish.

GINA

How does that reflect what I said?

PAMELA GLANDERSON

Haven't you realized? All sperm are perfect
for me!

GINA

But you have to be a match for them, too.

PAMELA GLANDERSON

(approaching HAROLD)

Just take a stab in the dark, I'm sure we'll
find something in common.

PAMELA and her three cohorts
circle GINA, who is trying to
shield ANDERS and HAROLD.

PAMELA GLANDERSON (CONT'D)

Waiting for perfect sperm. If I listen to you,
then I'm going to be part of next month's
cycle.

HAROLD

Coach?! What are you doing here?

COACH GAMETES

I came to see my star coiter back make that game-winning play. Now go ahead, you've got them right where you want them.

HAROLD

But, what about you?

COACH GAMETES

I don't know what J.R.'s doing up there, but I have more energy than ever. I'm here to make sure the job gets done. One way or another. (Beat.) Do you understand son?

HAROLD

I can't do it!

COACH GAMETES

Of course you can, Harold! Corkscrews, corkscrews. Just start spiraling on over there and get to producing the best child known to J.R!

HAROLD

Coach. I can't. I don't want those eggs. In fact, I don't want any egg. I'm a homochrome, Coach.

COACH GAMETES

Well Hell, I know that, Harold. It doesn't take a brain cell to figure that out!

HAROLD

Then why did you make me--

COACH GAMETES

I didn't want you to end up like I did.

HAROLD

You mean, you're a homochrome, too?

COACH GAMETES

Please. I prefer queer identifying gamete. The fact is, as you well know: fertilization or death. And homochrome or not, you'll make one fine baby boy. J.R. is counting on you.

(Beat.)

Now, which one is it going to be?

HAROLD looks back and forth
between ANDERS and GINA.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)
(Beat.)

Now, which one is it going to be?

HAROLD looks back and forth
between ANDERS and GINA.

HAROLD
I'm sorry coach, but I've found another path.

COACH GAMETES
Are you sure son?

HAROLD
I am.

COACH GAMETES
I understand.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
You're a homochrome? I can't believe I almost
absorbed you! (looking to Anders) At least we
could still inseminate.

ANDERS
I am the homochrome as vell.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
Both of you? Can't anyone in this ovary
inseminate me? Anyone?
(Noticing the audience)
What about all these other sperm?

COACH GAMETES
I regret to inform that they are on their way
to a warmer climate. If you catch my drift.

ALL shake their heads.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)
They're dead and are on their way to being
urinated out of the body. You made me say it.

PAMELA GLANDERSON
They can't all be dead.

GINA
That's right. Didn't they say this was going
to end with a zygote?

COACH GAMETES
I guess there could be one. Show yourself.

AUDIENCE member raises hand.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Swim on down. Do you have any objections to fertilizing her?

AUDIENCE member goes to touch
PAMELA.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

Not so fast.

(to HAROLD)

Welp, we reached the end of the race. Look me
in the eyes, son.

(singing)

"ALL-AMERICAN SPERM (REPRISE)"

YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF TESTS
THROUGHOUT THIS QUEST
YOU FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,
THERE'S NO WRONG OR RIGHT
YOU'RE A HERO MANIFEST.

<START CHORUS>

BEWARE IF YOU'RE A HYPODERM
AND IF FERTILIZATION IS YOUR CONCERN
DON'T HATE THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
A STANDING OVATE FOR THE ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
OUT OF THE EPIDIDYMIS CAME OUR CHAMPION
VARSITY ALL-STAR IN CHROMOSOME CARRYIN'
DON'T HATE THE ALL AMERICAN SPERM
A STANDING OVATE FOR OUR ALL-AMERICAN SPERM
<END CHORUS>

HE'S ALWAYS THE ONE WHO HAS YOUR BACK
NEITHER MORPHOLOGY, NOR MOTILITY DOES HE LACK
SO TRUE TO HIMSELF, HE SHOULD BE IN THE CARDIAC
A TRUE HYMEN TROPHY WINNER
OUR STAR COITER BACK.

COACH GAMETES (CONT'D)

(speaking; to AUDIENCE MEMBER)

Alright, now as we practiced.

GINA

Wait. We don't know if he is a match.

(to AUDIENCE MEMBER)

Let me see your flagellum.

PAMELA GLANDERSON

(in awe)

That's the biggest head I've ever seen!

GINA

Yep, they're a match.

(to AUDIENCE)

You know, it's not polite to stare.

(MORE)

"SWIMMING UPSTREAM: v.3/10/11"

34.

GINA (CONT'D)

Let's give them some privacy.

BLACKOUT.

THE END (OF EXCERPT)



Figure 10: Giant Glowing Orbs: Harold approaches the Egg Simulator¹⁰



Figure 11: Audience Interaction: Coach Gametes interacts with an audience member¹¹



Figure 12: Levels: Gina and Pamela Glanderson, incorporating levels¹²



Figure 13: The Winner: Pamela Glanderson meets the winning audience member¹

Appendix B:

Puppet Design Process

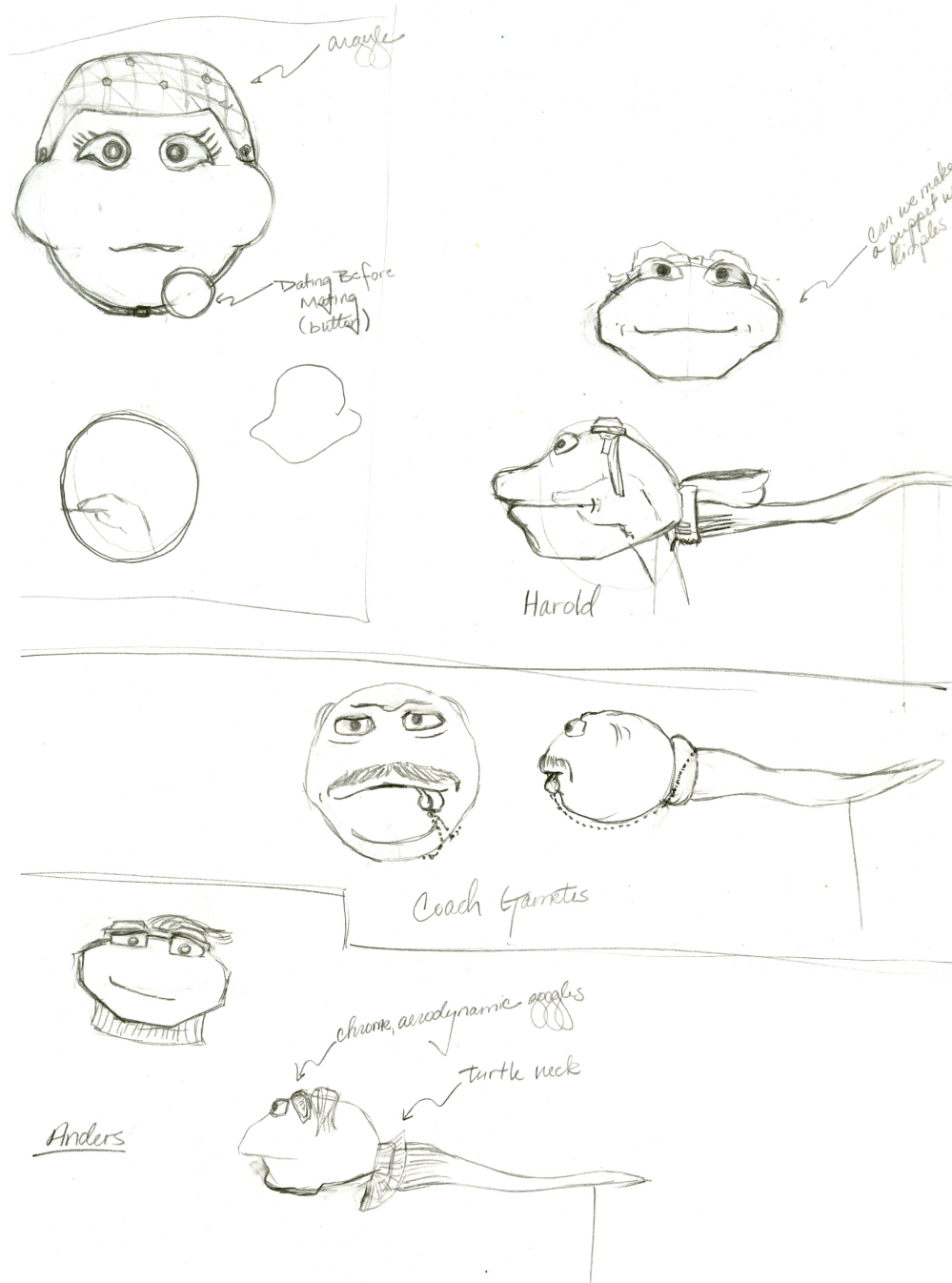


Illustration 4: Initial Puppet Sketches, by Ilana Marks

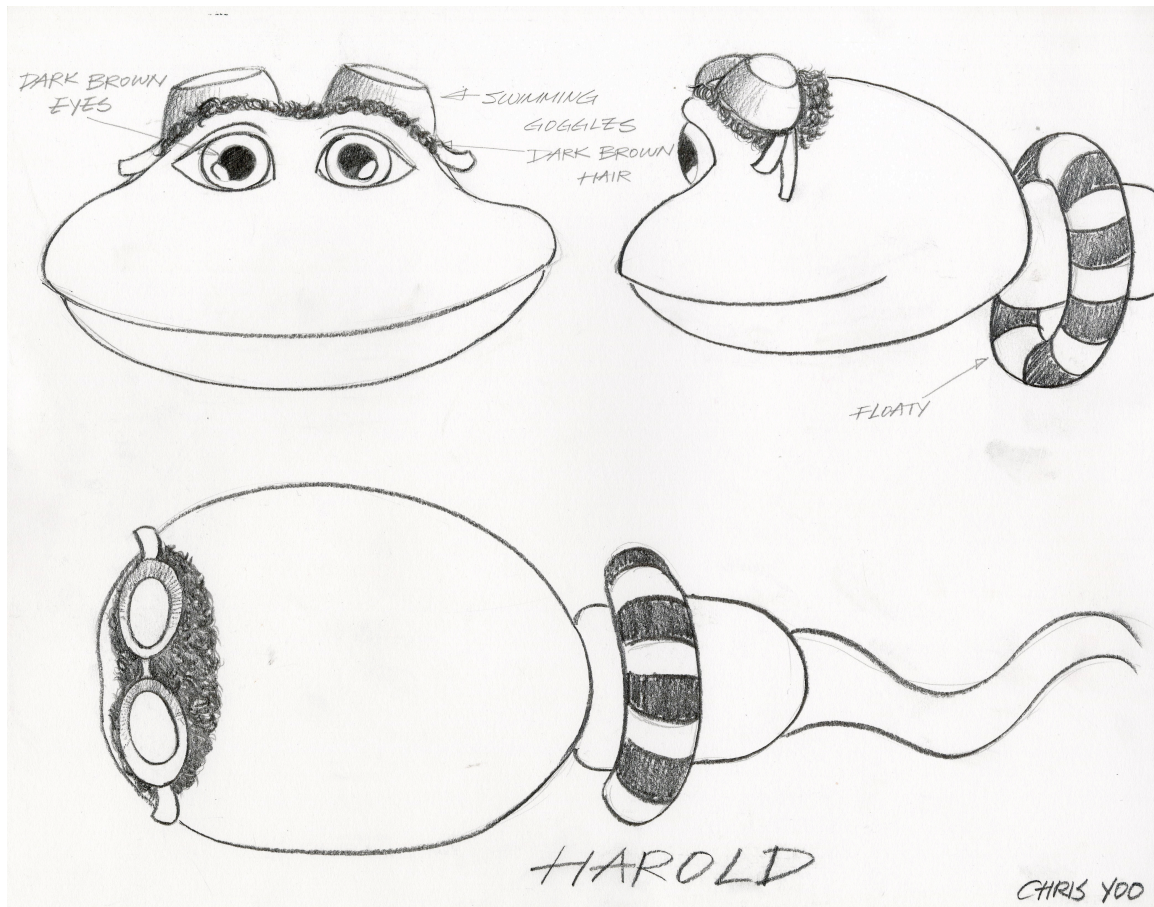


Illustration 5: Puppet Rendering for Puppet Builders: Harold, by Christina Yoo

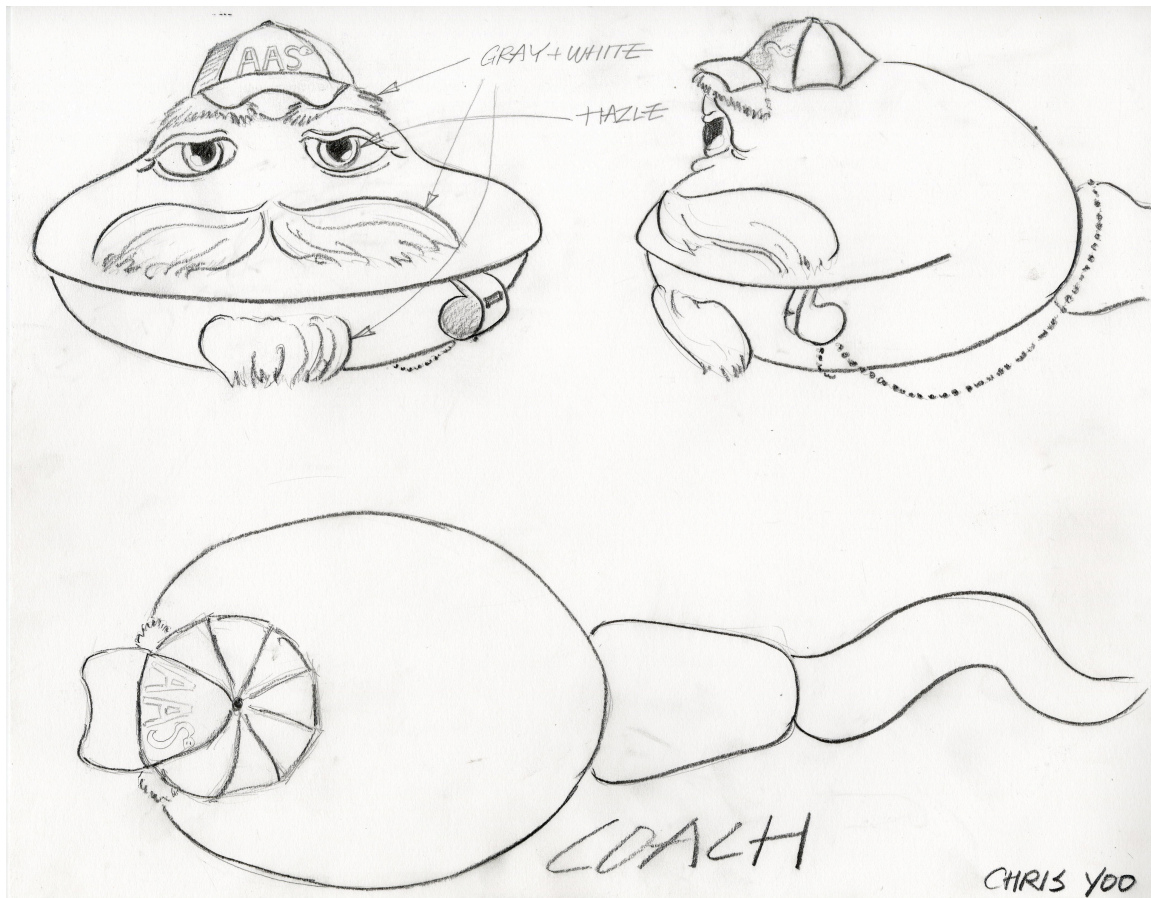


Illustration 6: Puppet Rendering for Puppet Builders: Coach Gametes, by Christina Yoo

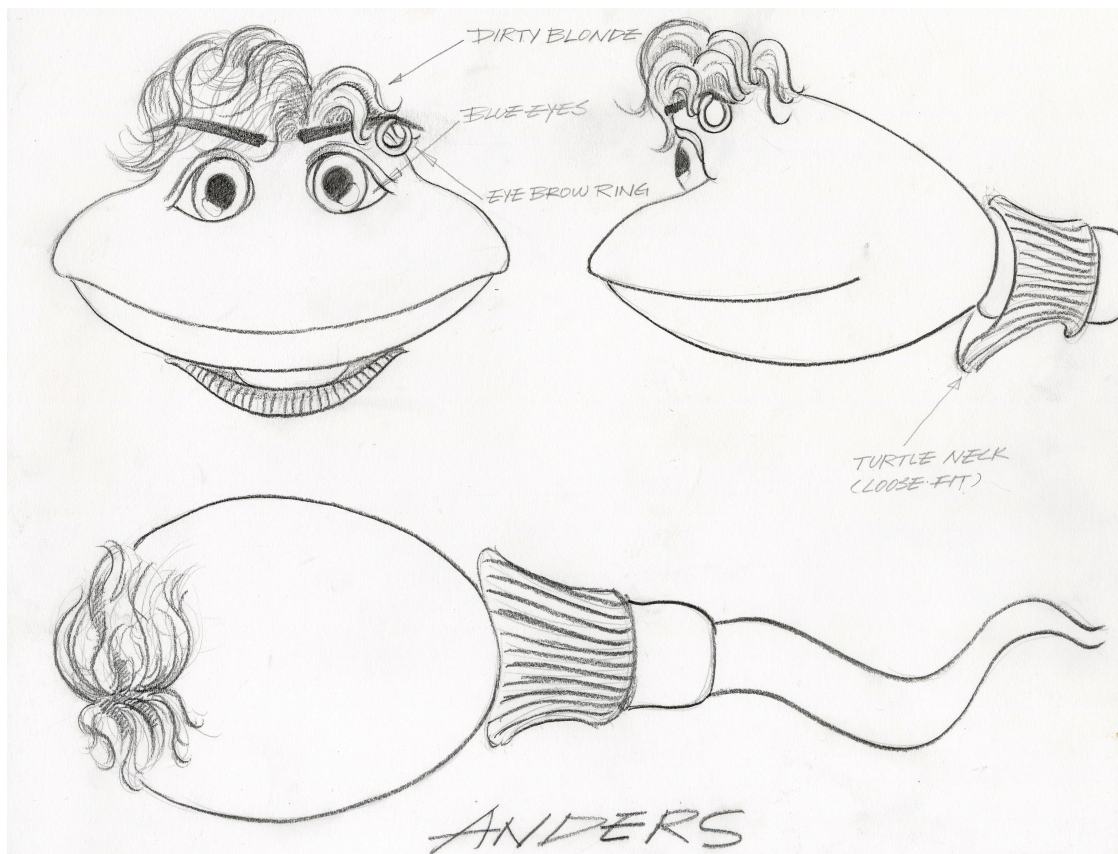


Illustration 7: Puppet Rendering for Puppet Builders: Anders, by Christina Yoo

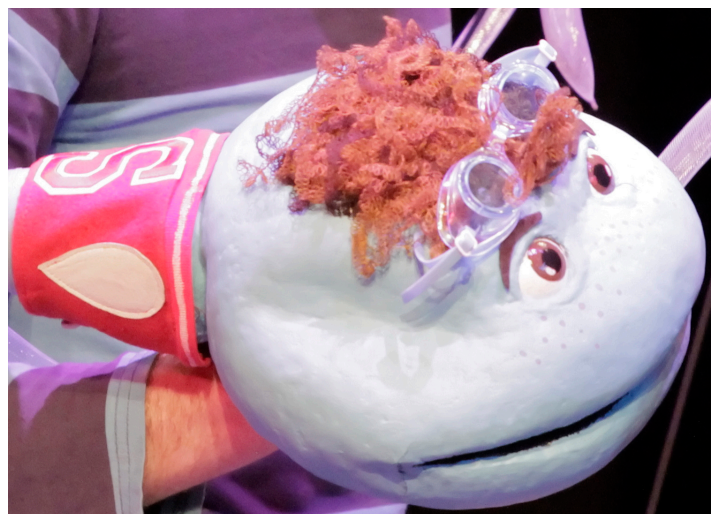


Figure 14: Harold's Letterman Jacket¹⁴

Appendix C:

Music Process

Electric Feel - MGMT

- This song best epitomizes the soundtrack for this piece. The strong beat and repeated synth riff at the opening mimic the strong sense of rhythm that exists in the body. The reverb gives the feel of traveling through a cavernous space.

Come Together - The Beatles

- This song has a little bit of the other-worldliness that “Electric Feel” shows. The way the song repeats the opening rhythm at different dynamics give the impression of reverb without the use of a synthesizer.

Eleanor Rigby - The Beatles

- The syncopation and texture throughout this song could be relevant to this world. They use strings to create this, but still have a rock feel.

Aerodynamic (Daft Punk Remix) - Daft Punk

- Reverb. The repetition of the same succession of notes at progressing chords gives the impression of movement. This song feels like an illustration of The Running of the Bull, especially right at the beginning and from about 1:11 to the end. Theme and variation, basically. The way this song ends with the gong is also relevant to Swimming Upstream.

One More Time - Daft Punk

- Similar appeal to “Aerodynamic,” and, in some ways “Electric Feel.”

Kids - MGMT

- Similar appeal as “Electric Feel”

Didn't I See This Movie? - Next to Normal (the Musical)

- The classic rock feel that starts at 30 seconds is exciting. I think that we can incorporate a lot of different styles of music into the score.

I'm Alive (Reprise) - Next to Normal (the Musical)

- This song feels like rock for a musical, and is achieved with piano, strings, and drums.

The Break - Next to Normal (the Musical)

- Multiple rock sounds that are achieved with non-electric instruments.

I am the One - Next to Normal (the Musical)

- Multiple rock sounds that are achieved with non-electric instruments.

Harden My Heart/Shadows of the Night - Rock of Ages (the Musical)

- I like the structure of this song. The composer has taken an existing rock song and made it Broadway by incorporating trading verses, a chorus, and layering sounds more interestingly.

Table 2: Score and Soundtrack Inspiration for First Meeting with Composer

Sc.	Pg	#	Slug Line	Song Title	Who	Song Feels Like...
1	3	1	Dr. Rollins' Office	Monkey Business	1, 2	JR pt = "Brett You've Got it Going On," Flight of the Conchords
2	9	2	(What reveals to be) Locker Room	All American Sperm	A, B	"When Did Your Heart Go Missing," Rooney "Somebody Else," Crazy Heart; or "I've Been Everywhere," Johnny Cash (esp. the start); or "The Man Comes Around," Johnny Cash; or
3	11	3	Practice Field - Day	Underscore: Educational Video		Pt During Running of Sperm: "Aerodynamic," Daft Punk or 1950s jingle
4	16	4	Test Tube	You Can't Stop Me From Coming/Cumming	A, C	
Int.	19	5	Empty Stage	Riding the Miles...	1, 2, A, B, C, D	"Brian Wilson," Barenaked Ladies
5	26	6	Female Body	My Ideal Match	D	"I Am the One," Next to Normal, esp. like verses
5	27	5B	Female Body	Riding the Miles (Reprise)	A, D	"Brian Wilson," Barenaked Ladies
5	33	2B	Female Body	All American Sperm (Reprise)	A, B	
5	34	1B	Female Body	Monkey Business (Reprise)	2	

Characters

- 1 J.R.
- 2 Dr. Ruby Rollins
- A Sperm Harold
- B Coach Gametes
- C Anders
- D Gina
- E Pamela Glanderson

Table 3: Song Outline

Appendix D:

Rehearsal Process

Date	Day	Time	Location	Who	What	Plan
1/29	Sa	5-9 PM	WIN 1.148	All	First Rehearsal	Read Through
2/5	Sa	5-9 PM	WIN 1.148	5-7: All 7-9: JA, MB	Puppetry workshop Scene 1	Guest Artist: Caroline Reck Words
2/7	M	3:30-5:15PM	WIN 1.108	MB, DS, MH	Scenes 2, 3, 4	Words, Loose Blocking
2/10	Th	6-9PM	WIN 2.180	JG, DS	Scene 5	Words, Moving in Space
2/14*	M	1) 3:30-5:15PM 2) 5-8 PM	1) WIN 1.108 2) WIN 1.148	1) DS, MB, MH 2) JA, MB, DS, JG	1) Scenes 2, 3, 4 2) Scenes 1, 5	Review, Puppets Actors Meet w/Composer
2/21	M	3:30-5:15PM	SAC 2.310	DS, MB, MH	Sc. 2, 3, 4	
2/22	Tu	5-8 PM	WIN 1.148	TBA	TBA	
2/23	W	5-8 PM	WIN 1.148	TBA	TBA	
2/24	Th	5:30-8:30 PM	WIN 2.180	DS, JG	Scene 5	
2/28	M	3:30-5:15PM	WIN B.202	DS, MB, MH	Scene 2, 4	Words, Blocking
3/2	W	5-6:30 PM 6:30-8 PM	WIN B.202	MH, DS, JA, MB	Sc. 4 Sc. 1, Interaction	Scott Kanoff Sits In Words, Blocking, Interact'n
3/5	Sa	5-6 PM 6-8 PM	WIN 1.164	JA, MB JA, MB, JG, DS	Sc. 1 Sc. 5	Blocking Words
3/7	M	5-6 PM 6-6:15 PM 6:15-6:30 PM 6:30-8 PM	WIN 1.164	DS, MB JA, MB DS, MH All	Sc. 2 Sc. 1 (Review) Sc. 4 (Review) Sc. 5	Words, Blocking Review Review Words, Blocking
3/9	W	5-8 PM	WIN 1.164	All	Sc. 5	Words, Blocking
3/10	Th	5-7 7-8 PM	WIN 2.112	All	Sc. 5 Puppetry & Music	Words, Blocking
3/14	M	3:30-4:30 PM 4:30-5:15 PM	TBA	DS, MH DS, MB	Sc. 4 Sc. 2	Blocking, puppets Blocking, puppets
3/16	W	12-1 PM 1-4 PM	WIN 1.148	JA JA, JG, DS, MH	Interaction Puppetry & Music	Discuss Interaction Meet w/Composer
3/17	Th	12-4 PM	WIN 1.148	JA, JG, DS, MH?	Sc. 3:-	Puppetry, Music, Choreography
3/21	M	3-5 PM	WIN B.202	DS, MB, MH	Scenes 2, 3, 4	
3/22	Tu	5-8 PM	WIN 1.164	All	Run Show	Puppets, Choreog., Music
3/23	W	5-8 PM	WIN B.202	All	Run Show	Puppets, Choreog., Music
3/24	Th	5-10 PM	OBT	All	Run Show	Puppets, Choreog., Music; Blocking; Tech Projections
3/28	M	1-4PM 4-5 PM 5-5:20PM	OBT	All	Tech/Call PERFORMANCE Talk Back	
3/30	W	7-9PM 9-10 PM	OBT	All	Tech/Call PERFORMANCE	
4/1	F	11AM-1PM 1-2 PM 2-2:20 PM	OBT	All	Tech/Call PERFORMANCE Talk Back	

Table 4: Rehearsal Schedule

Appendix E:

Swimming Upstream Cast & Creative Roster

The following people performed the roles credited to them in the March 28 & 30, and April 1, 2011 performances of Swimming Upstream: a fully produced workshop of an excerpt of a script by Ilana Marks.

Writer, Director, Lead Designer, Producing Director: Ilana Marks

Composer, Music Director: John Michael Hunt

Cast:

Mark Barnes: J.R., Coach Gametes Jennifer Adams: Dr. Ruby Rollins

Daniel Sullivan: Harold Michael Howell: Anders

Julia Gytri: Gina Cody Melcher, Rikki Perez: Facilitators

The Sperm Bank Band:

John Michael Hunt: Keyboard Kevin Mullin: Guitar

Kurt Schular: Percussion Peter Tossit: Bass Guitar

Technical Director: Nathan Graham

Puppet Design: Ryan Andrus, Christina Yoo

Puppet Construction: Kevin Beltz, Renee Berthelette, Stephanie Taff

Set & Costume Design: Katie Alyward

Set Construction: Nathan Graham, Jumana Rizik, Laura Spears

Lighting Design: Rachel Atkinson

Multimedia & Animation: Laura Davila, Jeff Kurihara

Projection Technician: Jeff Kurihara

Design Assistants: Rikki Perez, Lindsey Robertson

Hair & Makeup: Rikki Perez

Script Dramaturg/Doctor: Cody Melcher

Additional Crew: Cate Eby, Jumana Rizik

Program Design: Meredith Ragsdale

Web and Print Design: Ilana Marks

Photo Credits

1. Nachison, Emily. "The White Room Installation." Emily Ann Nachison Portfolio. 21 Jan 2011 <http://www.emilynachison.com/>.
2. Nachison, Emily. "The White Room Installation." Emily Ann Nachison Portfolio. 21 Jan 2011 <http://www.emilynachison.com/>.
3. South, Shannon. "Upcycled Doily." Handmade. 10 Jan 2010. 21 Jan 2011 <http://shannonsouth.wordpress.com/2011/01/10/upcycled-doily-lamp/>.
4. Photo by David Bjurstrom Photography
5. Frank Micelotta/Getty Images
6. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring Daniel Sullivan
7. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring Julia Gytri
8. Photo by Ilana Marks; Featuring (L→R): Mark Barnes, Caroline Reck
9. Photo by Ilana Marks; Featuring (L→R): Daniel Sullivan, Julia Gytri, Michael Howell, Mark Barnes, Caroline Reck
10. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring Daniel Sullivan
11. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring Mark Barnes
12. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring (L→R) Julia Gytri, Jennifer Adams
13. Photo by Patrick Rusk; Featuring (L→R) Jennifer Adams, Dan Lenzian
14. Photo by Patrick Rusk

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1. Beck, Julian. The Life of the Theatre: The Relation of the Artist to the Struggle of the People. San Francisco: City Lights Books. 1972.
2. Campbell, W. G. 1990. Form and Style in Thesis Writing, a Manual of Style. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
3. Malina, Judith, and Julian Beck. Paradise Now. New York: Random House. 1971.
4. Rostagno, Aldo, Julian Beck, and Judith Malina. We, the Living Theatre. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc. 1970.
5. Schechner, Richard. The End of Humanism. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications. 1982.
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7. Turabian, K. L. 1987. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 5th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Vita

Ilana Michelle Marks is from Greensboro, North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in Art & Design, and a B.S. in Textile Technology from North Carolina State University. Ilana designs for film, theatre, and attractions, including: the film *Possession* (production design); performances *Swimming Upstream* (writer, director, designer; premiered 2011 The University Co-op Presents the Cohen New Works Festival) and *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* (set, puppet, and projection design; winner: B. Iden Payne Award for Outstanding Production of Youth Theatre); work with the Jim Henson Workshop and Walt Disney Imagineering; and even puppet wrangling on *Sesame Street*.

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This thesis was typed by the author.